

Patrick West
6188 Edsall Road, Apt 163
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

Office of General Counsel
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20463

October 16, 2000

Re: Complaint Filing

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed are an original sworn complaint and three copies filed pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 437(g).

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (703) 212-6680.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick West

Patrick West

Enclosures (3)

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Before the Federal Election Commission of the United States

Patrick West
Complainant,

v.

The New York Times Company
Respondent.

Docket No. 5117

Complaint

Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 437(g) and 2 C.F.R. § 111.2, Complainant alleges:

The Parties

1. The Complainant, Patrick West, is a Virginia resident living at 6188 Edsall Road, Apt. 163, Alexandria, Virginia 22304 and may be reached at the following telephone number: The Complainant is not a candidate for political office and is not filing this Complaint on behalf of or at the request or suggestion of any candidate or political party.
2. The Respondent, The New York Times Company, is a corporation formed under the laws of the State of New York, with a principle place of business at 229 West 43rd Street, New York, New York 10036.

Summary of Complaint

3. Between December 1997 and the present, the Respondent has repeatedly violated 2 U.S.C. § 441(b), in that the Respondent made illegal in-kind corporate contributions of public relations services at the suggestion of the Republican National Committee (the "RNC"), its agent or affiliates, and without exercising its normal journalistic or editorial function, intended, or reasonably expected, to influence the outcome of the 2000 presidential election for the benefit of Republican candidate Governor George W. Bush.
4. The Respondent made the complained of in-kind corporate contributions by publishing and disseminating false statements regarding Democratic candidate Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., with knowledge of or reckless disregard for their falsity, and at the suggestion of the Republican National Committee, its agents or affiliates. Among the false statements published and disseminated by the Respondent are Gore's alleged claims to have "invented the Internet," to have "discovered Love Canal" and to have been

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the "inspiration for the novel Love Story." The actions appear to have been intended or reasonably expected to influence the outcome of the federal election by falsely impugning the integrity of candidate Gore before the public. All the false reports are currently published and available from Respondent through its web site, news service and through various commercial and noncommercial computer news services.

5. The Complainant limits his allegations of violation of federal election law solely to those incidents in which the public record indicates that the Respondent knew or recklessly disregarded truthful reporting of an event; received suggestions from the RNC, its agents or affiliates to publish false factual accounts; and published those false factual accounts with knowledge of, or reckless disregard for, their falsity. The Complainant argues that for purposes of federal election law such activity constitutes public relations services, rather than news reporting.
6. The Complainant therefore argues that the "news story exemption" of 2 U.S.C. Sec. 431(9)(B), essentially a codification of Constitutional protections afforded under the First Amendment, is inapplicable to the violations alleged in the Complaint, as the false reports were published with the Respondent's knowledge of or reckless disregard for their falsity. In the alternative, the Complainant argues that given the Respondent published the false reports with knowledge of or reckless disregard for their falsity and did so at the suggestion of the RNC, its agents or affiliates, without exercising any normal editorial function, the Respondent should be estopped from raising the "news story exemption" as a defense.

Statement of Facts

7. As has been reported on occasion throughout the period covered by this Complaint, some media, including the Respondent, have repeatedly covered a common story line alleging that Vice President Gore's occasional speaking errors represented a serious defect of character - dishonesty. The story line has been forwarded substantially by reliance on false reports of facts. Much of the false and derogatory coverage has come as a result of a systematic campaign of email, facsimile and other communication from the Republican National Committee, its agents and affiliates to reporters with the apparent intention of furthering the presidential candidacy of Governor George W. Bush. (See Exhibit 1, The Washington Monthly article, April 2000; also see various articles in The Daily Howler at dailyhowler.com.)
8. The Respondent has recognized, in an article by Alison Mitchell dated October 15, 2000, that such a campaign of RNC-inspired Gore character assassination occurred during this period. Exhibit 2. The article does not set forth the Respondent's participation in the campaign. However, the question of what the Respondent knew about the campaign and when did it know it is a question of fact to be addressed in a Commission investigation.

9. In buttressing this alleged dishonesty story line, many in the media, including Respondent, and the RNC have relied upon and promoted three false stories in particular to form the foundation of the attack on the Vice President's character: his alleged claims to have "invented the Internet," "inspired Love Story," and "discovered Love Canal." (See Exhibit 1, quoting RNC Chairman Jim Nicholson: "Remember, too, this is the same guy who says he invented the Internet, inspired Love Story and discovered Love Canal." See also, Campaign Briefing, The New York Times, March 30, 2000, A24, quoting Ari Fleischer, Bush campaign spokesman: "Since he invented the Internet, inspired 'Love Story' and discovered Love Canal, it's fitting that the vice president promote himself to president.")
10. Respondent published these three particular stories (among others) of alleged dishonesty on the part of the Vice President with knowledge of, or reckless disregard for, their falsity and at the direction or suggestion of the RNC with the intention, or reasonable expectation, of influencing a national federal election. As such, for purposes of federal election law, Complainant argues that such actions constitute the in-kind contribution of public relations services, rather than news reporting. (See below.)
11. Except where noted, all allegations are made on information and belief with applicable sources cited.

"Invention of the Internet"

12. On the March 9, 1999 broadcast of "Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer" on CNN, Blitzer interviewed Vice President Gore about the presidential campaign and other matters. Several minutes into the interview, Blitzer asked Gore about what he thought he had to bring to the Democratic nomination campaign that Senator Bill Bradley did not. Gore responded (in its entirety):

Well, I will be offering - I'll be offering my vision when my campaign begins. And it will be compelling enough to draw people toward it. I feel that it will be.

But it will emerge from my dialogue with the American people. I've traveled to every part of this country during the last six years. ***During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet.*** I took the initiative in moving forward a whole range of initiatives that have proven to be important to our country's economic growth and environmental protection, improvements in our educational system.

During a quarter century of public service, including most of it long before I came into my current job, I have worked to try to improve the quality of life in our country and in our world. And what I have seen

during that experience is an emerging future that's very exciting, about which I am optimistic, and toward which I want to lead. [*Italics added.*]

Exhibit 3 (CNN interview transcript)

13. Blitzer did not contest Gore's claim regarding the Internet, or anything else in the response, but went on to ask about a hypothetical presidential match-up against either Governor Bush or former Secretary Dole. The statement the Vice President made was truthful, if ill-worded, as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich pointed out in September of 2000: "[I]n all fairness Gore is the person who, in the Congress, most systematically worked to make sure that we got to an Internet." Speech at the American Political Science Assoc., September 2, 2000, C-SPAN, quoted in "Howlings," at Speakout.com, Exhibit 4.)
14. No major paper or wire service mentioned Gore's claim as to his legislative part in the creation of the Internet on either the day of the broadcast or the following day (Nexis search by Complainant). The earliest publicly archived allegation that Gore's statement was false comes in a press release from Republican Congressman Sensenbrenner's office on March 11th. Exhibit 5. The Complainant believes that similar accusations came from other agents and affiliates of the RNC on that day, including House Majority Leader Dick Armey. Exhibit 6.
15. The Respondent's first coverage of Gore's statement came on March 13th in an article by Frank Bruni. Exhibit 7. The article does not directly address the Gore statement about the Internet, but rather addresses the Republican reaction to the statement. The article covers both Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's mocking claim to having "invented the paper clip" and House Majority Leader Armey's claim to having "created the Interstate Highway system." At no point does Bruni examine the accuracy of Gore's claim or the context of the claim.
16. On March 24, 1999, Maureen Dowd, in an article in Respondent's New York Times, changed Gore's legislative initiative claim into "boasting that he was the father of the Internet." Exhibit 8. Of course, this characterization of the original Gore claim is completely unsupported even by the Times own prior March 13th coverage. The article comes just three days after the Washington Post ran an article by John Schwartz offering considerable support for the Vice President's claim. Quoted in Exhibit 5. Again, Dowd made no attempt to address the accuracy of Gore's original claim in what was generally a derogatory article about the Vice President.
17. Again, in a December 1, 1999 Times article, the allegation against Gore metamorphosed into "Mr. Gore [...] took credit for the development of the Internet" without any analysis of the accuracy, meaning or context of the original statement. Exhibit 9.

18. On February 17, 2000, in another Times article, the same author as in Paragraph 15 stated that Mr. Gore had taken "credit for inventing the Internet." Exhibit 10.
19. To Complainant's knowledge, the Respondent has never made an attempt to examine its coverage of this story or to correct the record.
20. Based on the foregoing, Complainant believes that Respondent published its false statements of fact regarding the Vice President's legislative Internet claims at the suggestion of the RNC, its agents and affiliates and with the knowledge that it would influence a federal election to the benefit of the then-presumed Republican nominee; that the Respondent had the opportunity to review the CNN transcript and to assess the accuracy of Gore's actual claim and knowingly or recklessly chose to publish the RNC's false rendition of events; and that Respondent did so without exercising its journalistic or editorial judgment, but rather acted solely as a public relations conduit for the RNC.

"Discovery of Love Canal"

21. On November 30, 1999, Gore spoke to a class of high school students in Concord, New Hampshire. During the talk, he exhorted the young people to reject cynicism and recognize that one person could effect important changes. As an example of one young person making a difference, he cited a high school girl from Toone, Tennessee who had written him when he was in Congress about a toxic waste site in her town. He said:

I called for a congressional investigation and a hearing. I looked around the country for other sites like that. I found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. Had the first hearing on that issue, and Toone, Tennessee - that was the one that you didn't hear of. **But that was the one that started it all.** [...] And it all happened because one high school student got involved. [Emphasis added.]

Quoted in Exhibit 1 and generally available on videotape (personal knowledge)

22. The statement Gore made to the students was true and, in context, it is clear that the phrase "But that was the one that started it all" refers to the toxic waste site in Toone, Tennessee that led eventually to congressional hearings. Exhibit 1.
23. However, in the Respondent's December 1, 1999 New York Times article on the event, the reporter misquoted Gore as saying, "But I [**not that**] was the one that started it all." [Emphasis added.] The article then went on to take the quotation out of context and mislead its readers into believing that Gore had claimed that he had discovered the toxic waste site at Love Canal when there had actually been federal action taken by President Carter two months

earlier. Although a correction of the quote was published on December 10, 1999, no correction of the misleading implications that Gore had lied about his role was ever published. Exhibits 1 and 10.

24. The RNC used the misquote to buttress their campaign of character assassination against Gore in faxes and handouts over the days following the speech and went so far as to correct the false quote from "I was the one **that** started it all" to "I was the one **who** started it all." Although the story was picked up by television news and other media, the Times made no attempt to correct the misrepresentations in its original article. Exhibit 1.
25. In fact, on December 26, 1999, The Boston Globe (also controlled by the Respondent) published an article on the disillusionment of the Concord students who heard the original Gore statements and complained about the coverage. In the article, the writer of the December 1 Times article is quoted as saying "This has really been blown out of proportion. We did get a word wrong. We corrected the word. It did not change the meaning." However, unlike the reporter, the high school students realized that the errors were much greater than the reporter claimed and many said they would not trust the media again. The article never specifically corrected the Times errors, but did add to the Love Canal story (Gore's "latest unjustified boast") factual misstatements that Gore "had already claimed to have invented the Internet and been the inspiration for the movie, 'Love Story.'" Exhibits 1 and 11.
26. Based on the foregoing, Complainant believes that Respondent continued to publish and failed to correct its false statements of fact regarding the Vice President's Love Canal comments in either tacit collusion with or at the suggestion of the RNC, its agents or affiliates with the knowledge that such publication would influence the 2000 presidential election to the benefit of the Republican nominee; that the Respondent had the opportunity to correct its mischaracterization and misstatements of fact and to review the publicly available videotape of the comments; that Respondent continued to publish the false statements with knowledge of, or reckless disregard for their falsity; and that Respondent did so without exercising its journalistic or editorial judgment, but rather acted solely as a public relations conduit for the RNC.

"Inspiration for Love Story"

27. In November of 1997, Gore gave an interview to two reporters - Karen Tumulty of Time magazine and Richard Berke of the New York Times, during a long, late night plane trip. During the long interview, Gore stated that he had read in a Tennessee newspaper that Erich Segal, the author of Love Story, had said that the book had been based on Gore and his wife, Tipper. Both Tumulty and Berke confirmed that the comment was a brief one made in passing and that Gore had attributed the story to the reporters; Berke did not even bother reporting the comment and Tumulty gave it only a brief mention in her article. There had, in fact, been such a report that Segal had said that in the Nashville Tennessean. Exhibits 1, 12 and 13.

28. Shortly after the brief mention in Tumulty's Time magazine article of Gore's statement about Love Story, the press office of the Republican National Committee, along with other RNC agents and affiliates began spreading the false version of the story of Gore claiming to be the model for the novel. They even went so far as to create a "Love means ..." contest with submissions to be sent to an RNC fax number. Exhibits 2 and 14.
29. On December 13, 1997, the Times published the first of Maureen Dowd's articles written based on the false story that Gore had claimed he and his wife were the models for the novel and the movie. In the article, Dowd stated that she had attempted to contact Erich Segal for comment, but had been told by his agent that Segal was "writing in seclusion." Exhibit 15.
30. On December 14th, the Times published an article by Melinda Henneberger entitled "Author of Love Story Disputes a Gore Story." In the article, Gore is assumed again to have made a false claim and the majority of the piece is devoted to debunking the claim. Only toward the end of the article does the author mention that both Tumulty and Berke confirmed that Gore had been attributing the story to Tennessee reporters and not to personal knowledge. The article does not confirm the existence of the old article cited by Gore. Exhibit 13.
31. And again, on December 16th, the Times ran yet another article assuming the RNC line that Gore had made another false boast. In Frank Rich's column, Rich claims:
- What's bizarre, if all too revealing, about Al Gore's now inoperative boast to reporters on Air Force Two that he and his wife, Tipper, were the basis for the hero and heroine of "Love Story" is not that he inflated his past but that he would think that being likened to the insufferable preppy Harvard hockey player Oliver Barrett 4th was something to brag about in the first place.
- Exhibit 16.
32. Exhibit 16 shows that the Respondent, in keeping with the RNC line of attack, switched what was initially an innocuous attribution to the work of a couple of Tennessee reporters into a damning comment on Gore's honesty, self-awareness and un-Frank Rich-like taste in fictional characters. Two days after the Times had correctly reported that Gore was only (correctly) citing a story from two Tennessee reporters (Exhibit 13), the Times falsely claims that Gore made up the whole story in some supremely misguided attempt to portray himself as someone we shouldn't even like. The story line presented her smacks of the derisive approach the RNC, its agents and affiliates took as early as 1997. Exhibits 1, 2 and 14.

33. The Times repeated the false report of Gore's alleged Love Story lying on at least two other subsequent occasions as part of buttressing the character assassination story line: March 24, 1999 (Exhibit 8) and February 17, 2000 (Exhibit 10). On both occasions, Gore was presumed to have told the Love Story lie, with neither support for the allegation cited nor explanation of the context. The unsupported accusation was also tossed into the December 26, 1999 Boston Globe article as implicit support for the Times' publication of the Love Canal accusation (the Globe also being a publication of the Respondent New York Times Company).

34. To the Complainant's knowledge, Respondent has never made an attempt to examine its coverage of this subject or to correct the record.

35. Based on the foregoing, Complainant believes that Respondent continued to publish and failed to correct its false statements of fact regarding the Vice President's Love Story comments in either tacit collusion with or at the suggestion of the RNC, its agents or affiliates with the knowledge that such publication would influence the 2000 presidential election to the benefit of the Republican nominee; that the Respondent had the opportunity to correct its mischaracterizations and misstatements of fact and to review publicly available truthful reporting of the event (including its own); that Respondent continued to publish the false statements with knowledge of, or reckless disregard for, their falsity; and that Respondent did so without exercising its journalistic or editorial judgment, but rather acted solely as a public relations conduit for the RNC, its agents or affiliates.

In support of the foregoing allegations, the Complainant presents and files herewith the Exhibits cited in the above paragraphs.

Patrick West

Patrick West, *pro se*

6188 Edsall Road, Apt. 163
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

(703) 212-6680

State of VIRGINIA

County or City of FAIRFAX

Patrick West, first being duly sworn, on oath deposes and says: That he is the Complainant; that he has read the foregoing Complaint and knows the contents thereof; and that the matters and things therein stated are true of his own knowledge, except those matters stated on information or belief, and as to them he believes them to be true.

Ralph Hammock

Subscribed and sworn to before me on OCTOBER 16, 2000

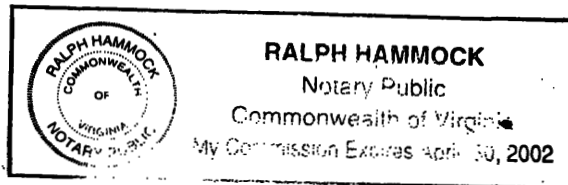


EXHIBIT 1

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April 2000

He's No Pinocchio

How the press has exaggerated Al Gore's exaggerations.

By [Robert Parry](#)

Al Gore may come across to many Americans as a smart guy with lots of experience and a clunky personal style. But the national news media have repeatedly portrayed the vice president in a much more sinister light: as a willful liar who may even live in a world of his own delusions.

This harsh assessment has been handed down across the media spectrum—from The Washington Post to The Washington Times, from The New York Times to the New York Post, from NBC's cable networks to the traveling press corps. Journalists and pundits freely denounce Gore as "a liar," "delusional," "Pinocchio," a "Zelig" character who inserts himself into improbable historical events.

Gore certainly has contributed to his own media problem with some imprecise phrasing and the kinds of exaggerations that all candidates make on the campaign trail. But journalists seem to have singled out Gore for extraordinary attention, with story after story reprising Gore's alleged pattern of deception.

But an examination of dozens of these articles, which purport to detail the chief cases of Gore's exaggerations and lies, finds journalists often engaging in their own exaggerations or even publishing outright falsehoods about Gore.

In December, for instance, the news media generated a small tidal wave of stories about Gore's supposed claim that he discovered the Love Canal toxic waste dump. "I was the one that started it all," he was quoted as saying. This "gaffe" then was used to recycle other situations in which Gore allegedly exaggerated his role or, as some writers put it, "lied."

But the Love Canal flap started when The Washington Post and The New York Times misquoted Gore on a key point and cropped out the context of another sentence to give readers a false impression of what he meant. The error was then exploited by national Republicans and amplified endlessly by the rest of the news media, even after the Post and Times filed grudging corrections.

The Love Canal controversy began on Nov. 30 when Gore was speaking to a group of high school students in Concord, N.H. He was exhorting the students to reject cynicism and to recognize that individual citizens can effect important changes.

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As an example, he cited a high school girl from Toone, Tenn., a town that had experienced problems with toxic waste. She brought the issue to the attention of Gore's congressional office in the late 1970s.

"I called for a congressional investigation and a hearing," Gore told the students. "I looked around the country for other sites like that. I found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. Had the first hearing on that issue, and Toone, Tennessee---that was the one that you didn't hear of. But that was the one that started it all."

After the hearings, Gore said, "We passed a major national law to clean up hazardous dump sites. And we had new efforts to stop the practices that ended up poisoning water around the country. We've still got work to do. But we made a huge difference. And it all happened because one high school student got involved."

The context of Gore's comment was clear. What sparked his interest in the toxic-waste issue was the situation in Toone---"that was the one that you didn't hear of. But that was the one that started it all."

After learning about the Toone situation, Gore looked for other examples and "found" a similar case at Love Canal. He was not claiming to have been the first one to discover Love Canal, which already had been evacuated. He simply needed other case studies for the hearings.

The next day, The Washington Post stripped Gore's comments of their context and gave them a negative twist. "Gore boasted about his efforts in Congress 20 years ago to publicize the dangers of toxic waste," the Post reported. "CEI found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal,' he said, referring to the Niagara homes evacuated in August 1978 because of chemical contamination. CEI had the first hearing on this issue.'... Gore said his efforts made a lasting impact. CEI was the one that started it all,' he said." [WP, Dec. 1, 1999]

The New York Times ran a slightly less contentious story with the same false quote: "I was the one that started it all."

The Republican National Committee spotted Gore's alleged boast and was quick to fax around its own take. "Al Gore is simply unbelievable---in the most literal sense of that term," declared Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson. "It's a pattern of phoniness---and it would be funny if it weren't also a little scary."

The GOP release then doctored Gore's quote a bit more. After all, it would be grammatically incorrect to have said, "I was the one that started it all." So, the Republican handout fixed Gore's grammar to say, "I was the one who started it all."

In just one day, the key quote had transformed from "that was the one that started it all" to "I was the one that started it all" to "I was the one who started it all."

Spinning Out of Control

Instead of taking the offensive against these misquotes, Gore tried to head off the controversy by clarifying his meaning and apologizing if anyone got the wrong impression. But the fun was just beginning.

The national pundit shows quickly picked up the story of Gore's new exaggeration.

"Let's talk about the 'Love' factor here," chortled Chris Matthews of CNBC's "Hardball." "Here's the guy who said he was the character Ryan O'Neal was based on in Love Story.... It seems to me... he's now the guy who created the Love Canal [case]. I mean, isn't this getting ridiculous?... Isn't it

getting to be delusionary?"

Matthews turned to his baffled guest, Lois Gibbs, the Love Canal resident who is widely credited with bringing the issue to public attention. She sounded confused about why Gore would claim credit for discovering Love Canal, but defended Gore's hard work on the issue.

"I actually think he's done a great job," Gibbs said. "I mean, he really did work, when nobody else was working, on trying to define what the hazards were in this country and how to clean it up and helping with the Superfund and other legislation." [CNBC's "Hardball," Dec. 1, 1999]

The next morning, Post political writer Ceci Connolly highlighted Gore's boast and placed it in his alleged pattern of falsehoods. "Add Love Canal to the list of verbal missteps by Vice President Gore," she wrote. "The man who mistakenly claimed to have inspired the movie Love Story and to have invented the Internet says he didn't quite mean to say he discovered a toxic waste site." [WP, Dec. 2, 1999]

That night, CNBC's "Hardball" returned to Gore's Love Canal quote by playing the actual clip but altering the context by starting Gore's comments with the words, "I found a little town..."

"It reminds me of Snoopy thinking he's the Red Baron," laughed Chris Matthews. "I mean how did he get this idea? Now you've seen Al Gore in action. I know you didn't know that he was the prototype for Ryan O'Neal's character in Love Story or that he invented the Internet. He now is the guy who discovered Love Canal."

Matthews compared the vice president to "Zelig," the Woody Allen character whose face appeared at an unlikely procession of historic events. "What is it, the Zelig guy who keeps saying, 'CEI was the main character in Love Story. I invented the Internet. I invented Love Canal.'"

Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, a Bill Bradley supporter, added, "I don't know why he feels that he has to exaggerate and make some of this stuff up."

The following day, Rupert Murdoch's New York Post elaborated on Gore's pathology of deception. "Again, Al Gore has told a whopper," the Post wrote. "Again, he's been caught red-handed and again, he has been left sputtering and apologizing. This time, he falsely took credit for breaking the Love Canal story.... Yep, another Al Gore bold-faced lie."

The editorial continued: "Al Gore appears to have as much difficulty telling the truth as his boss, Bill Clinton. But Gore's lies are not just false, they're outrageously, stupidly false. It's so easy to determine that he's lying, you have to wonder if he wants to be found out."

"Does he enjoy the embarrassment? Is he hell-bent on destroying his own campaign?... Of course, if Al Gore is determined to turn himself into a national laughingstock, who are we to stand in his way?"

On ABC's "This Week" pundit show, there was head-shaking amazement about Gore's supposed Love Canal lie.

"Gore, again, revealed his Pinocchio problem," declared former Clinton adviser George Stephanopoulos. "Says he was the model for Love Story, created the Internet. And this time, he sort of discovered Love Canal."

A bemused Cokie Roberts chimed in, "Isn't he saying that he really discovered Love Canal when he had hearings on it after people had been evacuated?"

"Yeah," added Bill Kristol, editor of Murdoch's Weekly Standard. Kristol then read Gore's supposed quote: "I found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. I was the one that

started it all." [ABC's "This Week," Dec. 5, 1999]

The Love Canal controversy soon moved beyond the Washington-New York power axis.

On Dec. 6, The Buffalo News ran an editorial entitled, "Al Gore in Fantasyland," that echoed the words of RNC chief Nicholson. It stated, "Never mind that he didn't invent the Internet, serve as the model for Love Story or blow the whistle on Love Canal. All of this would be funny if it weren't so disturbing."

The next day, the right-wing Washington Times judged Gore crazy. "The real question is how to react to Mr. Gore's increasingly bizarre utterings," the Times wrote. "Webster's New World Dictionary defines 'delusional' thusly: 'The apparent perception, in a nervous or mental disorder, of some thing external that is actually not present... a belief in something that is contrary to fact or reality, resulting from deception, misconception, or a mental disorder.'"

The editorial denounced Gore as "a politician who not only manufactures gross, obvious lies about himself and his achievements but appears to actually believe these confabulations."

But The Washington Times' own credibility was shaky. For its editorial attack on Gore, the newspaper not only printed the bogus quote, "I was the one that started it all," but attributed the quote to The Associated Press, which had actually quoted Gore correctly, ("That was the one...").

Back in Concord

Yet, while the national media was excoriating Gore, the Concord students who were present for the original quote were learning more than they had expected about how media and politics work in modern America.

The students, along with a Website called The Daily Howler, pressed for a correction from The Washington Post and The New York Times. "The part that bugs me is the way they nit pick," said Tara Baker, a Concord High junior. "[But] they should at least get it right." [AP, Dec. 14, 1999]

When the David Letterman show made Love Canal the jumping off point for a joke list, "Top 10 Achievements Claimed by Al Gore," the students responded with a press release entitled "Top 10 Reasons Why Many Concord High Students Feel Betrayed by Some of the Media Coverage of Al Gore's Visit to Their School." [Boston Globe, Dec. 26, 1999]

Finally, on Dec. 7, a week after Gore's comment, the Post published a partial correction, tucked away as the last item in a corrections box. But the Post still misled readers about what Gore actually said. The Post correction read: "In fact, Gore said, 'That was the one that started it all,' referring to the congressional hearings on the subject that he called."

The revision again distorted Gore's clear intent by attaching "that" to the wrong antecedent. From the full quote, it's obvious the "that" refers to the Toone toxic waste case, not to Gore's hearings.

Three days later, The New York Times followed suit with a correction of its own, but again without fully explaining Gore's position. "They fixed how they misquoted him, but they didn't tell the whole story," commented Lindsey Roy, another Concord High junior.

While the students voiced disillusionment, the two reporters involved showed no remorse for their mistake. "I really do think that the whole thing has been blown out of proportion," said Katharine Seelye of the Times. "It was one word."

The Post's Ceci Connolly even defended her inaccurate rendition of Gore's quote as something of a journalistic duty. "We have an obligation to our readers to alert them [that] this [Gore's false boasting] continues to be something of a habit," she said. [AP, Dec. 14, 1999]

The half-hearted corrections also did not stop newspapers around the country from continuing to use the bogus quote.

A Dec. 9 editorial in Pennsylvania's the Lancaster New Era even published the polished misquote that the Republican National Committee had stuck in a press release: "I was the one who started it all." The New Era then went on to psychoanalyze Gore. "Maybe the lying is a symptom of a more deeply-rooted problem: Al Gore doesn't know who he is," the editorial stated. "The vice president is a serial prevaricator."

In the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, writer Michael Ruby concluded that "the Gore of '99" was full of lies. He "suddenly discovers elastic properties in the truth," Ruby declared. "He invents the Internet, inspires the fictional hero of Love Story, blows the whistle on Love Canal. Except he didn't really do any of those things." [Dec. 12, 1999]

The National Journal's Stuart Taylor Jr. cited the Love Canal case as proof that President Clinton was a kind of political toxic waste contaminant. The problem was "the Clintonization of Al Gore, who increasingly apes his boss in fictionalizing his life story and mangling the truth for political gain. Gore---self-described inspiration for the novel Love Story, discoverer of Love Canal, co-creator of the Internet," Taylor wrote. [National Journal, Dec. 18, 1999]

On Dec. 19, GOP chairman Nicholson was back on the offensive. Far from apologizing for the RNC's misquote, Nicholson was reprising the allegations of Gore's falsehoods that had been repeated so often that they had taken on the color of truth: "Remember, too, that this is the same guy who says he invented the Internet, inspired Love Story and discovered Love Canal."

More than two weeks after the Post correction, the bogus quote was still spreading. The Providence Journal lashed out at Gore in an editorial that reminded readers that Gore had said about Love Canal, "I was the one that started it all." The editorial then turned to the bigger picture:

"This is the third time in the last few months that Mr. Gore has made a categorical assertion that is--well, untrue.... There is an audacity about Mr. Gore's howlers that is stunning.... Perhaps it is time to wonder what it is that impels Vice President Gore to make such preposterous claims, time and again." [Providence Journal, Dec. 23, 1999]

On New Year's Eve, a column in the Washington Times returned again to the theme of Gore's pathological lies.

Entitled "Liar, Liar, Gore's Pants on Fire," the column by Jackie Mason and Raoul Felder concluded that "when Al Gore lies, it's without any apparent reason. Mr. Gore had already established his credits on environmental issues, for better or worse, and had even been anointed (EMr. Ozone.' So why did he have to tell students in Concord, New Hampshire, (EI found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. I had the first hearing on the issue. I was the one that started it all.'" [WT, Dec. 31, 1999]

The characterization of Gore as a clumsy liar continued into the new year. In The Washington Times, R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. put Gore's falsehoods in the context of a sinister strategy:

"Deposit so many deceptions and falsehoods on the public record that the public and the press simply lose interest in the truth. This, the Democrats thought, was the method behind Mr. Gore's many brilliantly conceived little lies. Except that Mr. Gore's lies are not brilliantly conceived. In fact, they are stupid. He gets caught every time... Just last month, Mr. Gore got caught claiming... to have been the whistle-blower for (Ediscovering Love Canal.'" [WT, Jan. 7, 2000]

It was unclear where Tyrrell got the quote, "discovering Love Canal," since not even the false quotes had put those words in Gore's mouth. But Tyrrell's description of what he perceived as

Gore's strategy of flooding the public debate with "deceits and falsehoods" might fit better with what the news media and the Republicans had been doing to Gore.

An Old Story

Beyond Love Canal, the other prime examples of Gore's "lies"---inspiring the male lead in Love Story and working to create the Internet---also stemmed from a quarrelsome reading of his words, followed by exaggeration and ridicule rather than a fair assessment of how his comments and the truth matched up.

The earliest of these Gore "lies," dating back to 1997, was Gore's expressed belief that he and his wife Tipper had served as models for the lead characters in the sentimental bestseller and movie, Love Story.

When the author, Erich Segal, was asked about Gore's impression, he stated that the preppy hockey-playing male lead, Oliver Barrett IV, indeed was modeled after Gore and Gore's Harvard roommate, actor Tommy Lee Jones. But Segal said the female lead, Jenny, was not modeled after Tipper Gore. [NYT, Dec. 14, 1997]

Rather than treating this distinction as a minor point of legitimate confusion, the news media concluded that Gore had willfully lied. In doing so, however, the media repeatedly misstated the facts, insisting that Segal had denied that Gore was the model for the lead male character. In reality, Segal had confirmed that Gore was, at least partly, the inspiration for the character, Barrett.

Some journalists seemed to understand the nuance but still could not resist denigrating Gore's honesty.

For instance, in its attack on Gore over the Love Canal quote, the Boston Herald conceded that Gore "did provide material" for Segal's book, but the newspaper added that it was "for a minor character." [Boston Herald, Dec. 5, 1999] That, of course, was untrue, since the Barrett character was one of Love Story's two principal characters.

The media's treatment of the Internet comment followed a similar course. Gore's statement may have been poorly phrased, but its intent was clear: He was trying to say that he worked in Congress to help develop the Internet. Gore wasn't claiming to have "invented" the Internet or to have been the "father of the Internet," as many journalists have asserted.

Gore's actual comment, in an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer that aired on March 9, 1999, was as follows: "During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet."

Republicans quickly went to work on Gore's statement. In press releases, they noted that the precursor of the Internet, called ARPANET, existed in 1971, a half dozen years before Gore entered Congress. But ARPANET was a tiny networking of about 30 universities, a far cry from today's "information superhighway," ironically a phrase widely credited to Gore.

As the media clamor arose about Gore's supposed claim that he had invented the Internet, Gore's spokesman Chris Lehane tried to explain. He noted that Gore "was the leader in Congress on the connections between data transmission and computing power, what we call information technology. And those efforts helped to create the Internet that we know today." [AP, March 11, 1999]

There was no disputing Lehane's description of Gore's lead congressional role in developing today's Internet. But the media was off and running.

Routinely, the reporters lopped off the introductory clause "during my service in the United States Congress" or simply jumped to word substitutions, asserting that Gore claimed that he "invented"

the Internet, which carried the notion of a hands-on computer engineer.

Whatever imprecision may have existed in Gore's original comment, it paled beside the distortions of what Gore clearly meant. While excoriating Gore's phrasing as an exaggeration, the media engaged in its own exaggeration.

Yet, faced with the national media putting a hostile cast on his Internet statement---that he was willfully lying---Gore chose again to express his regret at his choice of words. He has continued to do so in this year's televised Democratic debates.

Always Out of Context

On Feb. 17, The New York Times was back on the Gore-distortion beat with an article co-authored by Katharine Seelye and entitled "Questions Over Veracity Have Long Dogged Gore." The article asserted that some of Gore's distortions "are familiar and fairly trivial," such as "taking credit for inventing the Internet or being the model for Erich Segal's Love Story." But the piece argued that "concern about Mr. Gore's truthfulness dates back to the earliest days of his political career" and could reflect some "deeper problem."

In one example, the article alleged that Gore "overstated his one foray into real estate development to persuade groups of business executives that he was one of them. That claim led Arlie Schardt, who was Mr. Gore's communications director during the 1988 presidential campaign, to warn the candidate in a memo, 'Your main pitfall is exaggeration.'"

What was especially strange about this anecdote, however, was that it clashed with Schardt's own recollection of the events, which he had detailed a day earlier---Feb. 16---on The New York Times' op-ed page. In his op-ed piece, Schardt stated that the "pitfall" memo "was not prompted by any groundswell of reports alleging that Mr. Gore was exaggerating his accomplishments. It was instead one of many memorandums routinely written to prepare the candidate for questions by reporters who I knew had a particular interest in uncovering some deception (a few openly resented the presumptuousness of a 39-year-old's running for president).

"One such reporter was digging into a comment Mr. Gore had made about having worked briefly as a home builder. My memorandum cautioned him not to exaggerate. 'Your main pitfall is exaggeration' was actually pre-emptive advice, not a response to something Mr. Gore had already said."

Nevertheless, on February 17, in the Gore "veracity" story, the Times dropped Schardt's explanation that the memo was "pre-emptive advice." The article then went further, implying that Schardt was confirming that Gore had exaggerated his real-estate experience. The article stated that Schardt said his "warning referred only to this specific claim regarding the real estate development." The phrasing left readers with the opposite impression of Schardt's position, as presented in the op-ed piece.

The Feb. 17 article did include one case of "gotcha" in which Gore was nailed for a real misstatement. The Times noted that Gore had claimed to be a "co-sponsor" of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill, when that was impossible because Gore was vice president when Feingold entered the Senate. In this case, Gore admitted "a mistake," with the explanation that he had co-sponsored numerous campaign reform bills while in Congress and had supported McCain-Feingold as vice president.

The Washington Times followed up The New York Times' article by again reprising the growing litany of Gore's supposed lies. "It may seem that Vice President Gore has taken the cue from his boss when it comes to finessing the truth," an editorial read. "However, the fact is that Mr. Gore was lying long before he ever teamed up with Bill Clinton."

Though The New York Times had jettisoned the Love Canal canard, The Washington Times continued to misrepresent the key quote, although with a new twist. According to this version, Gore lied when he said it was he who "Ehad the first hearing on that issue... that started it all." [WT, Feb. 29, 2000]

Reasons for this media contempt for Gore vary. Conservative outlets, such as The Washington Times and Murdoch's media empire, generally want to ensure the election of a Republican conservative to the White House. They are often eager to advance that cause.

In the mainstream press, many reporters may feel that savaging Gore protects them from the "liberal" label that can so damage a reporter's career. Others simply might be venting residual anger over President Clinton's survival of the Monica Lewinsky scandal. They might see Gore's political destruction as a fitting end to the Clinton administration.

Yet, the national media's prejudice against Gore---now including fabrication of damaging quotes and misrepresentation of his meanings---raises troubling questions about this year's election and how it will be covered:

How can voters have any hope of expressing an informed judgment when the media intervenes to transform one of the principal candidates---an individual who, by all accounts, is a well-qualified public official and a decent family man---into a national laughingstock?

What hope does a candidate have when the media can misrepresent his words so thoroughly that they become an argument for his mental instability---and all the candidate feels he can do about the misquotes is to apologize?

Robert Parry is the editor of the investigative magazine American Dispatches. He is also editor of a Website, Consortiumnews, where portions of this story first appeared.

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THE CREDIBILITY ISSUE

A Sustained G.O.P. Push to Mock Gore's Image

By ALISON MITCHELL

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14 — When Vice President Al Gore felt the need during the last presidential debate to say he was sorry that he "got some of the details wrong" in recent anecdotes, the admission was not just a sign that Mr. Gore had hurt himself with his tendency to embellish.

The moment also was the culmination of a skillful and sustained 18-month campaign by Republicans to portray the vice president as flawed and untrustworthy. Gov. George W. Bush himself said, just before Mr. Gore apologized, that "credibility is important."

Indeed, Republican strategists say that long before Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore emerged as their parties' respective nominees, they already knew that during a time of peace and prosperity, character would be one of their most important arguments for retaking the White House.

And many in the Republican Party began using mockery to question Mr. Gore's veracity even before the nation was put through the turmoil of President Clinton's lies about his relationship with a White House intern.

"I can hardly remember a time when it wasn't on our radar screen that Al Gore had a propensity to both exaggerate and fabricate," said Clifford May, the spokesman for the Republican National Committee.

Acknowledging that the vice president does have a history of making small embellishments, several Democrats said it was the Republicans who had tied his relatively innocuous statements back to President Clinton's deception about his affair. "I think the Republicans have very skillfully spent two years trying to create a caricature of Al Gore," one Democrat said. "They've tried to make it Clintonesque."

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One of the first salvos came in December 1997, when the committee announced it had started a contest to come up with a slogan for Mr. Gore after he told reporters that the hero and heroine in the novel "Love Story" were modeled after him and his wife, Tipper. (Erich Segal, the author, soon said that his protagonist, Oliver Barrett IV, was only partly based on Mr. Gore, while Jenny Cavilleri had nothing to do with Tipper Gore.)

"The R.N.C. wants your best 'Love Means . . .' slogan for Al and Tipper Gore," the party said in a press release. One of its suggested entries was "Love means never having to tell the truth."

That was only the beginning. After President Clinton's impeachment, candidates in both parties prepared to run the 2000 presidential race as a referendum against Bill Clinton and his dissembling. And Republicans began seizing on comments by the vice president.

So when Mr. Gore said in an interview with CNN in March 1999 that "during my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet," Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi, the majority leader, issued this mocking statement: "During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the paper clip."

Representative Dick Armey of Texas, the House majority leader, said, "If the vice president created the Internet, then I created the Interstate highway system." The chairman of the House Science Committee, F. James Sensenbrenner Jr., Republican of Wisconsin, put out a statement from the committee headlined, "Delusions of Grandeur: Vice President Gore takes credit for creating the Internet."

And that April, the Republican Leadership Council, a Washington-based group, bought two days' worth of advertising in the San Francisco area poking fun at the same claim. Americans for Tax Reform, a group that works closely with Congressional Republicans, started a Web site to track the vice president's comments.

Michele A. Davis, Mr. Armey's spokeswoman, described the mocking of the Internet remark as spontaneous combustion. But, she said, Mr. Armey's aides then became an informal clearinghouse for efforts in Congress to poke fun at Mr. Gore, such as readings on the House floor of the most oblique or provocative sections of his book "Earth in the Balance."

"We would just kind of compile stuff and send it out to talk radio and to members," she said.

On the day Mr. Gore announced his candidacy in Carthage, Tenn., his family's hometown, Jim Nicholson, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, had a more elaborate stunt. He rode in a wagon pulled by mules to the hotel on Embassy Row in Washington where Mr. Gore lived for much of his youth.

"He has tried to pass himself off as this hardscrabble, homespun central Tennessee farm boy and that is not what he is," said Mr. Nicholson, playing off the fact that Mr. Gore had told The Des Moines Register that he had learned to slop hogs and clear land on the family farm. Friends later told reporters that Mr. Gore's father had kept him on a backbreaking work schedule during summers on the family farm.

The Republicans got help as well from an unexpected source. When the Democratic primary fight became bitter, former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey insisted that Mr. Gore had deliberately distorted his policy positions in what he called a "pattern of misrepresentation." At one point, Mr. Bradley spat out, "Why should we believe that you will tell the truth as president if you don't tell the truth as a candidate?"

The Bush campaign subsequently used that remark at the top of its press releases.

Mr. Gore's aides say the Republicans have blown up trivial misstatements to turn the campaign away from such matters as tax cutting, health care and Social Security.

"The Republicans have always known they would lose the campaign if it actually focused on issues that mattered in people's lives," said Douglas Hattaway, a spokesman for Mr. Gore.

But the personality of candidates does matter when Americans walk into the voting booth — perhaps never more so than in this age of 24-hour mass media.

"Americans feel an intimacy with the president of the United States," said Senator Robert G. Torricelli, a New Jersey Democrat. "The president is no longer, with the breadth of radio and television, a distant personality."

Shaping how Americans view a personality is a crucial part of campaigns. "Every single candidate at every level — but it becomes magnified at the presidential level — has a caricature being drawn of them by the other side," a Bush adviser said. "One of the things you're always trying to do in a campaign is to cut against the stereotype."

Mr. Bush's advisers say portraying Mr. Gore as an embellisher also allows them to raise doubts about Mr. Gore's assaults on Mr. Bush's agenda.

Some people are still surprised that Mr. Gore gave his opponent fresh ammunition in the first debate.

"It's remarkable to me that this has occurred," said Greg Stevens, who had been a media strategist for Senator John McCain. "This is the most devastating attack that could be delivered on Gore," Mr. Stevens added. "It ties him back to Clinton."

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VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE IS INTERVIEWED ON CNN'S LATE EDITION WITH WOLF BLITZER

CNN LATE EDITION

MARCH 9, 1999

SPEAKERS: VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE
WOLF BLITZER, HOST

[*]

BLITZER: Mr. Vice President, thanks for joining us on Late Edition.

GORE: Glad to do it.

BLITZER: You're going to be going to Iowa and New Hampshire in the coming days. Less than a year from now, we probably will know who the Democratic nominee is, who the Republican nominee is for the president. Why do you want to be president?

GORE: Well, Wolf, I haven't formally announced my candidacy yet, but when I do, I will lay out a vision of what I want to see in this country in the 21st century. And the campaign won't be about me, it'll be about the American people, and I hope they'll choose that vision of a nation with strong families and livable communities, in harmony with all of our diversity and fully prepared to lead the world.

BLITZER: You've created an exploratory committee, though. When do you make the formal announcement? It's not going to be...

GORE: Later this year.

BLITZER: It's not going to be a surprise.

GORE: Well, perhaps not. But it won't come until later this year.

BLITZER: When?

GORE: Haven't picked a date.

BLITZER: Are you looking at some precedents, some previous examples? When Vice President Bush, for example, made his announcement?

GORE: No, I won't base it on previous campaigns, I'll just look at see what seems like the right time.

BLITZER: Some people have suggested that you will try to emerge from Bill Clinton's shadow during the course of the coming year. Others say you don't want to emerge from his shadow. The question to you is, do you want to emerge from the president's shadow?

GORE: Well, I don't feel like I'm in his shadow. I think the job of vice president is very different and very distinct from the job of president. And for the last 6 years-plus, I've concentrated on doing the best job I can as vice president to help he be the best president he can be. And I've really enjoyed that. It's been a great privilege and honor, but as a presidential candidate -- when I become one -- I will be in a very different relationship to the American people. And at that time, I'll be speaking about my vision for what I want to see in this country in the 21st century.

And I'm looking forward to that. I'm very excited about the

chance.

BLITZER: And the Al Gore vision will not be necessarily completely the same as the Bill Clinton?

GORE: Well, no, because the challenges we face in the future are different from the ones we face in the past. I have been very much involved in shaping our current economic policies, and I feel as if I know a great deal about how to keep our prosperity going.

We have a governing coalition willing to support the ideas that work for the American people. I have also participated in shaping our environmental and education and crime fighting policies and other initiatives, but the challenges are going to be brand new.

You know, the 21st century is not only the beginning of a new millennium, it's the beginning of an entirely new era in human history and we have to take new approaches.

BLITZER: I want to get to some of the substance of domestic and international issues in a minute, but let's just wrap up a little bit of the politics right now.

Why should Democrats, looking at the Democratic nomination process, support you instead of Bill Bradley, a friend of yours, a former colleague in the Senate? What do you have to bring to this that he doesn't necessarily bring to this process?

GORE: Well, I will be offering -- I'll be offering my vision when my campaign begins. And it will be comprehensive and sweeping. And I hope that it will be compelling enough to draw people toward it. I feel that it will be.

But it will emerge from my dialogue with the American people. I've traveled to every part of this country during the last six years. During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet. I took the initiative in moving forward a whole range of initiatives that have proven to be important to our country's economic growth and environmental protection, improvements in our educational system.

During a quarter century of public service, including most of it long before I came into my current job, I have worked to try to improve the quality of life in our country and in our world. And what I've seen during that experience is an emerging future that's very exciting, about which I'm very optimistic, and toward which I want to lead.

BLITZER: On this political front, the polls currently see Governor George Bush of Texas and even Elizabeth Dole ahead of you in a hypothetical race nearly two years away from today. Why do you think that's the situation?

GORE: Well, what will decide the outcome of the presidential contest in the year 2000 will not be public opinion polls but the power of ideas, the quality of leadership, the compelling vision that I will offer for the American people and how they respond to it. It won't be decided by public opinion polls.

BLITZER: Although there is one poll that recently came out that did show 45 percent of the voters, 45 percent of the American people, say they've already ruled out voting for you.

GORE: Well, you know, in -- a few decades ago, IBM predicted that the total market worldwide for computers would be a few dozen. Those predictions turned out to be wrong. Other predictions of the future have been famously wrong because they didn't take into account what the reality is.

And polls are simply predictions of the future, in this case of an election that's two years away. And you know the old saying that six months is a lifetime in politics. That means there are four lifetimes

between now and then.

And once again, polls will not determine the outcome in any way, shape or form. Ideas will. The compelling vision offered by -- when I become a candidate later this year and when that dialogue with the American people begins, their decision will be based not on polls.

BLITZER: You know, several of your potential Republican challengers, including former Vice President Dan Quayle, have slammed you for saying on that day that the president was impeached that Bill Clinton will go down as one of America's greatest presidents. Do you still feel that way, knowing today what you knew then?

GORE: Well, look at what this administration has done. We went from the largest budget deficit in history to the largest budget surplus in history. We went from a period of high unemployment and high inflation to high employment and historically low unemployment and virtually zero inflation.

The last economic report came out with six percent growth and virtually zero inflation; 18 million new jobs; improved reading test scores for our children; a six-year drop in the crime rate, continuing to decline; a cleaner environment; a new feeling on the part of all of our people that we do have the capacity to make our democracy work for our future and to solve our problems.

We are steadily gaining in our ability to reclaim control of America's destiny. That's what we're intended to do as Americans. Now this has all happened in the last six years. And incidentally, it happened when we changed course. I had the privilege of breaking the tie vote, and there were zero Republican votes for the new plan that's produced -- even though in the country, Republicans, Independents, Democrats, they all supported the changes that we've brought about.

BLITZER: So even though the president was impeached, and by his own admission did engage in reckless conduct with an intern here at the White House, you still stand by that basic statement, he will go down as one of America's greatest presidents?

GORE: The Bible says by your fruits, ye shall know them. And the fruits of this administration's success are known by the American people to be good for our country. The policies have been tremendously successful.

Now we need to continue our prosperity and use the prosperity to move our country forward and upward, and to make our country not only better off, but better.

BLITZER: Is there any specific strategy you plan on engaging in during the campaign to deal with this issue -- the impeachment issue, the scandal issue, the impact, potential spillover effect on you from the president's behavior?

GORE: Well, Wolf, what the president did was terribly wrong. It was indefensible. He's apologized for it. And you know what the American people want? They want us to move on. They want us to focus on the future and talk about them and work on their problems and build their future, not wallow in the past.

BLITZER: That sounds like a strategy that you will have to work on. Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, Dennis Hastert, the speaker of the House, are refusing at this point to say they trust the president and to engage in the kind of kind of bipartisan cooperation necessary to move on on issues like education, Social Security, Medicare. Is there any window of opportunity now to get some of these programs off the ground? Or is there going to be deadlock, gridlock right now for the foreseeable future?

GORE: Well, the American people are in charge of our self-government, not the Republican leaders of the Congress. They have an argument among themselves, and the American people have been puzzled as to why they won't focus on the people's business. I hope and expect that eventually

they will, because there is a rising demand from the American people that politicians in both political parties work together and stop fighting ideological battles that are sometimes beside the point. Where the nation's business is concerned, they want us to make progress, keep the prosperity going and solve the problems.

BLITZER: But there are some philosophical differences. On the education issue, the Republicans want local communities to be in control. They accuse the Democrats and you of wanting the federal government in Washington to dictate ...

GORE: No, no.

BLITZER: ... to local school districts the kind of education policy they should be using.

GORE: No, no. We want ...

BLITZER: And there's a deadlock today in the Senate on this specific issue.

GORE: We want accountability, and we want to measure the results so that we are moving in the right direction. And let's take that amendment that is pending today. We know how to improve our schools. The single most important thing we can do is to have fewer students in each classroom, more well-trained teachers, so that each teacher will have more time to spend individually with each student.

You can think back in your own upbringing, I can, and remember the teachers who made a difference. And always, it was the one who had more time to spend with you, who connected and who understood that you learned in a slightly different way from any other child. Because every child is that way.

How do we create that kind of extra time for teachers to do what they do best and give them the training? Well, the answer is about hiring more teachers and giving them the best training in the world.

Let me draw a comparison to what we did in fighting crime. We said we need more community police officers. And so we finally convinced the Congress to pass a law that hired 100,000 new community police officers, greatly expanded the size of the force around the country, and then deployed them on the sidewalks, not in squad cars, where they could develop one-on-one relationships.

What's happened as a result? The crime rate has dropped in every category for six years in a row.

We know how to solve this problem in the same way we know how to bring about improvement in our schools. Let's hire 100,000 new teachers, give them the training they need, and reduce the class size in the early grades. That's the amendment that's pending. Senator Murray and Senator Kennedy are pushing it forward. The Republican leaders are trying to block it.

The Republicans out in the country are the same as the Democrats and Independents out in the country. They want to see these improvements. They don't want a fight on false ideological boundaries where the real issue is how do we solve the problem.

BLITZER: Let's move on to a key international issue on your agenda today, namely the situation with China. China's been accused of human rights abuses. It's been accused of engaging in unfair trade practices, a record trade deficit with the United States. It has made bellicose statements against Taiwan in recent days, threatening Taiwan. And now there are allegations that the Clinton administration under your watch, that the administration was negligent in dealing with an allegation of espionage of nuclear secrets at the Los Alamos nuclear facility, research facility.

Do you continue to engage in your policy, as you call it, "constructive engagement" with China, in the midst of all of these allegations?

GORE: Well, first of all on the law enforcement matter that you raise, please keep in mind, that happened during the previous administration. That happened back in the 1980s. And as soon as the investigation identified targets of that investigation, then the law enforcement community handled that very aggressively, and it resulted in a presidential directive that completely changed the security procedures in the weapons labs. And as far as the law enforcement aspects of that are concerned, you have to go to the appropriate agencies.

BLITZER: But you heard Senator Lott and Senator Shelby say over the weekend that this administration was negligent...

GORE: Well...

BLITZER: ... was lax in dealing with the threat that some people thought really existed at that time because of the overall need to engage China.

GORE: Again, this happened in the previous administration, and the law enforcement agencies have pressed it and pursued it aggressively with our full support. And in the course of this, what developed was a brand new presidential directive that fixed problems that we had inherited and changed and vastly improved the security procedures in the national laboratory system.

BLITZER: As you look to these allegations, do you continue this engagement policy with China, or do you pause and reassess where the United States should be going with China?

GORE: Well, China is the most populous country in the world. Its economy is growing, and its role in the world is going to continue to grow whether we want that or not. And so, obviously, having a relationship with them within which we can try to affect their behavior and improve human rights, eliminate unfair trade practices, and bring about the kinds of changes that will lead to further democratization in China, these things are in our interest. We do that without compromising our principles in any way; indeed, by enhancing our ability to speak out on behalf of human rights and more freedom in China.

We have seen now 10,000 local democratic elections in China. We've seen a slow progress towards elections at the next highest level, the county level, it would be seen in our system. And we have also seen some movement toward more reporting and more press activity inside China.

That kind of thing can build upon itself and bring greater reforms. But we're very concerned about some of the practices of China, and we've made that clear to them. We will continue to make it clear to them.

BLITZER: I know you have to go, but a quick question on your becoming soon a grandfather.

(LAUGHTER)

Is this going to change your life?

GORE: Tipper and I are so excited. It's hard to find the words for the thrilling feeling it gives you to think that you're going to be a grandparent for the first time. We're expecting our first grandchild this summer, and we can hardly wait.

BLITZER: Are looking to some other grandfathers for grandfatherly advice?

GORE: Well, that's not a bad -- everybody tells me that it's even better than having children, and I'm looking forward to finding out for myself.

BLITZER: You get the benefits without the pain.

GORE: Well, I must say, I remember seeing my parents and Tipper's parents fawn over their grandchildren in a way that I never experienced when I was their age, and I think everybody gets a kick out of that. I'm looking forward to experiencing it from the standpoint of the grandparent, and that'll be later this year in the summer.

BLITZER: Well, good luck to the grandparents and the parents.

GORE: Thank you.

BLITZER: Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for joining us on Late Edition.

GORE: Thank you, Wolf.

BLITZER: Thank you.

END

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Author not available, *VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE IS INTERVIEWED ON CNN'S LATE EDITION WITH WOLF BLITZER.* , Washington Transcript Service, 03-09-1999.

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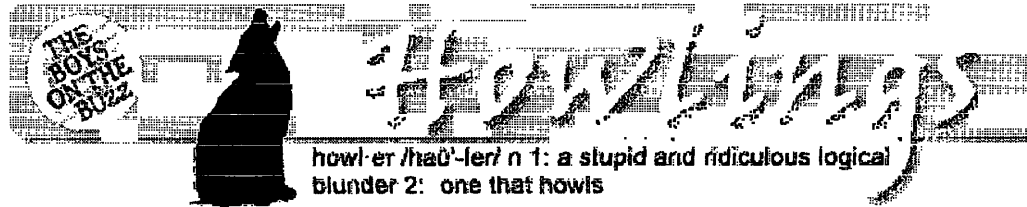
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Covering the RNC Ad, Part 1: "In All Fairness"

Tuesday, September 5, 2000

Last Friday evening, former speaker Newt Gingrich took part in a colloquium for the American Political Science Association. The panel was broadcast live on C-SPAN. Speaking about the 1996 Telecommunications Bill, Gingrich at one point said this:

GINGRICH: In all fairness, it's something Gore had worked on a long time. Gore is not the Father of the Internet, but **in all fairness Gore is the person who, in the Congress, most systematically worked to make sure that we got to an Internet**, and the truth is—and I worked with him starting in 1978 when I got there, we were both part of a "futures group"—the fact is, in the Clinton administration the world we had talked about in the '80s began to actually happen. You can see it in your own life, between the Internet, the computer, the cell phone.

Again, this is Newt Gingrich, boys and girls, Father of the Republican Revolution: "Gore is the person who, *in the Congress*, most systematically worked to make sure that we got to an Internet" (my emphasis). Gingrich said the statement should be made "in all fairness," but fairness has had almost nothing to do with press coverage of Gore and the Net. Neither has simple intelligence. For almost eighteen months, the press corps has engaged in a long-running gong show, painting Gore as a wierdo (and worse) for a single past statement on this subject. The matter was brought into question last week by the release of a new campaign ad.

The ad, by the Republican National Committee, deals with Gore's 1996 luncheon at the Hsi Lai Buddhist temple. It also deals with a statement Gore made about the Internet in March 1999. Near its end, the RNC ad accuses Gore of "claiming credit for things he didn't do." It then shows tape of Gore from the CNN program, *Late Edition*, saying "I took the initiative in creating the Internet."

The ad nimbly edits Gore's statement. On *Late Edition*, Wolf Blitzer asked Gore what set him apart from his Democratic rival, Bill Bradley. In the course of listing his career accomplishments, Gore said this (total length, sixteen words):

GORE: During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet.

And, except for those who live to pick nits, Gore's statement is essentially accurate. As Gingrich noted, Gore is the person who, *in the Congress*, did most to develop—yes, "create"—the Internet. (Gingrich said that Gore did most "to make sure that we got to an Internet.") The RNC ad—like most of the press corps' treatment of this statement—cleverly drops Gore's opening clause, in which it becomes clear that Gore is discussing his work *in the Congress*. It is no accident that Gore's original 16-word statement has almost always been "edited" down to just eight.

Gore didn't say he "invented the Internet." Gore didn't say he was "father of the Internet." Those phrases—which you've read again and again—are the creations of our hapless press corps, which has spun and distorted this inane topic ever since March '99. But now, with the release of this much-discussed RNC ad, serious charges are made about Gore's character. The ad ends with this statement: "Gore will say anything." It is the press corps' duty to critique this ad, to see if its charges are accurate.

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corps' numerous critiques of this ad, we have seen only one reporter—Glen Johnson of the Boston Globe—reproduce the full text of Gore's actual statement. Thousands of words have been written on this ad, and no one seems to have enough space to restore the eight missing words. Meanwhile, Katharine Seelye examined the ad for *The New York Times* last Friday. We threw up our hands when Seelye wrote this:

SEELYE (9/1): ON THE SCREEN ...[The ad] shows him in a "Larry King Live" interview saying: "I took the initiative in creating the Internet." The camera returns to the kitchen. Flashed on the screen is a web site, gorewillsayanything.com.

On "Larry King Live!" Amazing! Seelye, the Times' Gore reporter since early 1999, doesn't even know what program this statement derives from! One might well wonder how hard she has worked to get at the truth of this long-running tale.

The RNC ad makes two specific claims. First, it says Gore "raised campaign money at a Buddhist temple." Second, it says Gore "claim[ed] credit for things he didn't even do" in his remark about the Internet. Throughout this week, we'll be looking at the press corps' analysis of these two claims. But we'll also be reviewing the press corps' conduct over the past eighteen months—the remarkable work the corps has done in spinning Gore character themes. In our view, the press corps' conduct in this area has been the press story of this campaign. It's time to explain why we think that.

But for today, let's compare statements—one from Gore, and one from Gingrich. See how closely the two statements coincide. And then ask yourself how this silly story could possibly have gone on so long—how it can be that we've spent eighteen months reading burlesques of Gore's statement:

Al Gore, March 1999: During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet.

Newt Gingrich, September 2000: Gore is the person who, in the Congress, most systematically worked to make sure that we got to an Internet.

For eighteen months, we've read burlesques of Gore's statement. In all fairness, we must finally ask: Why?

Tomorrow: Watching the press spin a statement.

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EXHIBIT 5

24-04-407-0532

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR: VICE PRESIDENT GORE TAKES CREDIT FOR CREATING THE INTERNET

Press Release# 106-18

Contact: Jeff Lungren March 11, 1999
(Jeff.Lungren@mail.house.gov)
(202) 225-4275

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR: VICE PRESIDENT GORE TAKES CREDIT FOR CREATING THE INTERNET

Sensenbrenner: "I had no idea!"

WASHINGTON, D.C. - House Science Committee Chairman F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR., (R-WI) today expressed surprise at learning Vice President Al Gore is taking credit for creating the Internet.

"Having served with the Vice President for four years on the Science Committee, I must admit I had no idea my friend Al Gore created the Internet. I know he was involved in a lot of big projects like accomplishing the 'strategic goal of completely eliminating the internal combustion engine' (Earth in the Balance, p. 326), but I was totally unaware of his Internet creation," Sensenbrenner said.

In an interview that aired March 9, 1999 with CNN's Wolf Blitzer, Gore said, "During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet."

The Internet's initial development, a system called ARPANET, here-to-for had been credited to scientists in the 1960's, with approximately thirty universities having ARPANET by 1971. Al Gore did not serve in Congress until 1979.

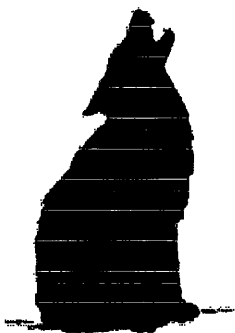
"Vice President Gore taking credit for creating the Internet certainly gives new meaning to the term 'March Madness,'" added Sensenbrenner.

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The Daily Howler

Caveat lector

26 March 1999

Our current howler (part III): But who invented the blast fax?

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The Daily Howler

by Bob Somerby

somerby@dailyhowler.com

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Synopsis: Dick Arney faxed out some Internet spin.
The press corps typed it up.

Gore Deserves Internet Credit, Some Say
John Schwartz, *The Washington Post*, 3/21/99

Al Gore: Method Man
William Greider, *Rolling Stone*, 4/1/99

Vice president plays up role as Net 'evangelist'
Chuck Raasch, *USA Today*, 3/19/99

GOP: Gore's claim does not compute
Michelle Mittelstadt (AP), *The Washington Times*,
3/12/99

Gore Internet gaffe gives critics club for campaign
Rowan Scarborough, *The Washington Times*,
3/16/99

Did Vice President Gore "invent the Internet?" Better yet: Did he say that he did? Here is what the VP said when he chatted with Wolf on March 9:

GORe: During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet.

And of course Gore *did* take the lead, *within the Congress*, in promoting and advancing the technical developments that have led to our now-beloved Net. Here's what Internet guru Vinton Cerf told the Post's John Schwartz:

SCHWARTZ: Vinton G. Cerf, a senior vice president at MCI Worldcom and the person most often called "the father of the Internet" for his part in designing the network's common computer language, said in an e-mail interview yesterday, "I think it is very fair to say that the Internet would not be where it is in the United States without the strong support given it

and related research areas by the vice president in his current role and in his earlier role as senator."

According to Schwartz, Katie Hafner, co-author of a history of the Internet, "agreed" with that assessment:

SCHWARTZ: Hafner said people have been haggling over the true beginnings of the network for decades. "...[T]here are so many people who did at least one pivotal thing in either creating the network, or encouraging the use of the network, or bringing the network to the public--and Gore was one of those people."

William Greider wrote this, in a *Rolling Stone* profile published before the recent flap:

GREIDER: [Gore] held the first congressional hearings on industry's casual disposal of toxic wastes and on global warming, and he was an early champion of the system we now call the Internet.

Chuck Raasch, of *USA Today*, quoted University of Pennsylvania professor Dave Farber, whom Schwartz described as "one of the early players in the Internet:"

RAASCH: Dave Farber, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, told [*The Commercial Appeal* of Memphis], "Gore did not technically create the Internet, but without him there is a good chance it would not be where it is today."

Indeed, when Gore made his initial statement March 9, it produced no comments in the press corps. On Wednesday, March 10, and on Thursday, March 11 not a word was written. Even in the *Washington Times*, a paper which lives for Clinton-Gore scandal, not a single word appeared about what the VP had said.

But to many within this celebrity press corps, it's just not a day without scandal. And as we've often shown you before, the scribes just love being handed spin, and rushing it right into print! And that's exactly how the Great Gore Scandal took the nation on Friday, March 12, as obedient pundits recited spin they'd been handed by historian Richard Arney.

We're not quite sure who invented the fax, but Arney sure knows how to use it. He sends out messages of dubious accuracy, and pundits just type them right up! For the pundits, it's a whole lot simpler than going out and spending their time doing real reporting! And Arney's stuff has pre-packaged panache, the kind that those editors simply love!

And so it was that, starting on Friday, the nation's press was full of experts, spinning remarkably similar tales about how the Net had begun. The *Washington Times* ran AP on page one. Here's how the story began:

MITTELSTADT: Vice President Al Gore's claim that he is the father of the Internet drew amused protests yesterday from congressional Republicans.

SECRET

would have taken some of the bang from the story. So Mittelstadt juiced it up a bit with her "father of the Internet" jive.

In paragraph two, Mittelstadt's source becomes clear; she quotes a thoroughly perplexed Mr. Arney, describing Gore's statement as an "outrageous claim." And she says that Gore had "raised eyebrows" on Tuesday when he made his worrisome statement. But as we've mentioned, we're not quite sure just where it was that those eyebrows were raised. No *journalist* had said a word about it--not until Arney's staff hit the fax.

Was the ARPANET where the Net began? Back in '69, when Al Gore was a boy? We don't really know, and the scribes don't know either. But Dick told Mitt, and Mitt typed it up. And after that, everyone said it.

Micro-managing: Several pundits were helpful in saying that Gore had a word out of place:

SCARBOROUGH: Pollster John Zogby said the vice president would be better off claiming he "helped" or "aided" in developing the phenomenon...Mr. Zogby added: "The boastfulness could be worrisome for him. It's almost as if there's a self-esteem problem there."

Zogby can't predict a Senate race in his home state, but suddenly now he's the shrink to the stars. Professor Farber, less grandiose, offered a similar assessment:

SCHWARTZ: "The guy used an inappropriate word," Farber said. "If he had said he was instrumental in the development of what it is now, he'd be accurate."

But to this ever-vigilant celebrity press corps, an inappropriate word means a character flaw. This same press corps, remember, assailed Dan Quayle because he managed to spell a word wrong. Gore was "instrumental" in *developing* the Net. What's the scandal? He *said* it so wrong.

Next: It reminded worried pundits of the *Love Story* flap. But that flap was completely made up.

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March 13, 1999, Saturday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 8; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 419 words

HEADLINE: Inventors of Paper Clips and Tall Tales

BYLINE: By FRANK BRUNI

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Capping a week that illuminated whole new dimensions to the talents and accomplishments of this city's most powerful politicians, Senator Trent Lott, the majority leader, revealed today that he was the inventor of the modern paper clip.

"During my service in the United States Congress," Mr. Lott, a Mississippi Republican, said in a written statement, "I took the initiative in creating the paper clip. Paper clips bind us together as a nation."

Was he for real? Not exactly, although he was doing an awfully good imitation.

Mr. Lott's deadpan announcement, printed on his official letterhead, was the latest and cleverest effort by Republicans to rib Vice President Al Gore for a statement on Tuesday on CNN in which he said he "took the initiative in creating the Internet."

Mr. Gore was referring to a legislative career in which he promoted technological advancements, but his Republican colleagues obviously thought his precise phrasing grabbed a tad too much credit.

"If the Vice President created the **Internet**," Representative Dick Armey, the House majority leader, said in a statement after Mr. Gore's remarks, "then I created the Interstate highway system."

Mr. Lott's claim was a bit more ingenious, because it poked fun not only at Mr. Gore but also at himself. Mr. Lott is famous for his fastidiousness.

Today's news release said: "Lott, known for his passion for order, said that paper clips are a crucial element to a well-organized office. Lott also noted that paper clips help contribute to a growing economy."

The release quoted the Senator as saying: "Paper clips are the engine of the U.S. economy. The Dow will soon break 10,000, due in part to strong growth in the paper clip industry."

And it included six sketches chronicling the evolution of Mr. Lott's sketches for the paper clip, culminating in the creation of the current design on April 1, 1973. Note the month and day.

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In a telephone interview from Miami, where the Vice President was visiting a Federal "empowerment zone," a spokesman for Mr. Gore said that Mr. Lott's claim was apt.

"It's no surprise that Senator Lott and the Republicans are taking credit for an invention that has been around for centuries," the spokesman, Christopher S. Lehane, said, at least partly in jest. "After all, their policies are intended to take us back to the Dark Ages."

But once again, the Gore camp was reaching a bit too far. The paper clip, sired by a Norwegian man named Johan Vaaler, goes back only about 100 years.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

GRAPHIC: Photo: Trent Lott, politician-inventor. But who invented the wheel? (Associated Press)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 13, 1999

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March 24, 1999, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 27; Column 1; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 728 words

HEADLINE: Liberties;
Saving Private Gore

BYLINE: By MAUREEN DOWD

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Al Gore could do worse than to take a lesson from the Oscars.

Inevitability can be insufferable.

The Vice President could turn out to be the "Saving Private Ryan" of Presidential candidates. Last summer, Steven Spielberg's World War II movie was proclaimed all but certain to win best picture. It was worthy. It was good. It was dutiful. There was nothing flashy or sexy about it. It was, in short, Al Gore.

But after months of hearing about the front-runner's invincibility, Academy voters couldn't wait to overturn it -- preferring to make love, not war -- and give the statuette to a sassy Elizabethan upstart with a biting political campaign and a clever message.

Prince Al might do well to nudge aside his Dreamworks team and lend an ear to Harvey Weinstein, the Miramax big shot who toppled "Ryan" with his "Shakespeare in Love."

Mr. Gore has all the classic trappings of the front-runner. He has bulldozed endorsements from the Democratic chieftains, Dick Gephardt and Tom Daschle, and scooped up money from Wall Street to Hollywood. He recycles small, poll-tested policies and bite-sized issues, like creating a special telephone number for commuters in traffic jams.

His itty-bitsy "livability" issues echo Dick Morris, who brought President Clinton back from the brink of political extinction by having him cater to the worries of self-centered boomers. But some Gore supporters wonder if it's wise to repeat the trick.

There's a weird syndrome kicking in. The more the Vice President hugs his mantle of inevitability -- the closer he moves to the prize he has wanted his whole life -- the more skittish he gets about taking chances.

His Hollywood gurus want to rush in with some speech coaching. His old friends see the pressure building and tell him to loosen up.

The more afraid he is to make mistakes, the more mistakes he makes. The more the coast looks clear, the more Mr. Gore throws impediments in his own way.

Even though he has the background and accomplishments to be President, he takes no Clintonesque joy in campaigning and seems insecure, giving curiously flat and airless speeches and needlessly inflating his feats and his history.

Recently the Vice President has repeated the mistake he made with "Love Story" and drawn ridicule by boasting that he was the father of the **Internet** and a master at cleaning hog waste and plowing farmland with a team of mules.

"He's so afraid to make mistakes," said one Democrat who has worked with him and likes him. "You hold everything in and hold everything in and hold everything in and then all of a sudden, stuff pops out."

He first played the Good Son to his father, the legendary Tennessee Senator and populist stemwinder. He then played the Good Brother to the wayward and sweet-talking Bill Clinton, in a sort of West Wing version of "East of Eden." Now he seems tongue-tied and timid.

The closer he gets to the crown, the less Prince Albert is able to integrate the two sides of his personality. He shows the more appealing side to reporters and friends in private. But get him on a podium and he coils and clinches, reading even the simplest greeting or expression of gratitude in a dead-zone voice. At a Gore 2000 fund-raiser at a Washington hotel, one prominent Democratic supporter derided Mr. Gore's freeze-dried remarks with a sardonic aside, saying, "Gee, he should think about bottling that." Tipper Gore didn't help the sizzle factor by introducing her husband as "an outstanding fellow."

Bill Clinton doesn't even bother to recover from mistakes. He just keeps going. Al Gore spends a week plotting a strategy to fix his mistake and finally comes up with a self-deprecating joke at just the moment everyone has started forgetting the original gaffe.

So far, the 2000 race is between two dauphins born at third base. Al and George are the sons of famous politicians named Al and George. While they both may suffer from famous-father syndrome, they are reacting against their dads in different ways. Mr. Gore's supporters worry that he is too controlled and zombie-like. Mr. Bush's supporters fear he isn't controlled enough and in the heat of a campaign may become hotheaded.

One has yet to articulate in a fetching way. One has yet to articulate at all. It won't be long before we look back nostalgically to the days when politics was entertainment.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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December 1, 1999, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final
Correction Appended

SECTION: Section A; Page 20; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 833 words

HEADLINE: Gore Borrows Clinton's Shadow Back to Share a Bow

BYLINE: By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE

DATELINE: BEDFORD, N.H., Nov. 30

BODY:

Vice President Al Gore asserted today that the nation's prosperity was the central imperative of his campaign, and he gave credit to President Clinton -- and himself -- for the booming economy.

"In this campaign for president, economic policy should be front and center," Mr. Gore told a group of business executives here this morning as he allied himself fully with the President whose shadow he has otherwise been trying to escape.

"President Clinton has presided over an economic policy in the current administration that has been historic in its realism about what works and what doesn't work," Mr. Gore said, "and I'm proud to have been a part of the deliberations that have helped to set this economic policy in place."

Mr. Gore's comments were his strongest about his role in the current prosperity, and the remarks were striking in their full embrace of Mr. Clinton. Far from separating himself from the President, as he had been doing so frequently, Mr. Gore praised him often and used the word "we" to describe the administration's economic successes.

"I want you to know that I am determined to continue the prosperity and to continue the policies that have worked to build that prosperity," he said, pledging that as president he would invest in public education and job training for workers.

In his talk to the business group, he promised to reduce the deficit "every single year" of his presidency. Background papers issued by his staff said that he pledged to "make certain that America stays on the path to be debt-free by 2015," but he did not say that to this audience.

Later in the day, Mr. Gore, who suffered some embarrassment this year when he took credit for the development of the Internet, said he was the one who had first drawn attention to the toxic contamination of Love Canal. He was telling a school audience that each person can make a difference in the world and he recalled a child writing to him when he was in Congress about a hazardous-waste site in Tennessee.

He then added: "I found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. I had the first hearing on that issue and
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Toone, Tenn.," he said. "But I was the one that started it all. And it all happened because one high school student got involved."

Mr. Gore held Congressional hearings on the matter in October 1978. But two months earlier President Jimmy Carter had declared Love Canal a disaster area, and the federal government, after much howling by local residents, had offered to buy the homes.

Mr. Gore was not available to answer questions from reporters after he made this statement.

In his economic speech Mr. Gore also discussed his little-known work as a real estate developer in the early 1970's in Daleville, Ala.

"For a brief time I was a home builder, after I came back from Vietnam," he told the audience. "Tipper and I borrowed some money and bought 20 acres on the edge of the town where we lived and made it into a subdivision, 35 lots, and I had a partner who built several homes and then sold the rest of the lots. I know a good bit about how to make money that way -- that was our nest egg. To build this country is a great thing."

Peace and prosperity are traditionally overriding issues in national elections, but mostly when they are threatened. Mr. Gore's advisers said he had not focused on prosperity until now because the economy was humming and voters were more concerned about education, health care and school safety. But Mr. Gore has been preoccupied over the last several months with the mechanics of his campaign and changing his image. And today's assertion was as much a declaration that he wanted to turn the conversation to the pocketbook issues that voters focus on increasingly as an election approaches. As one adviser put it, Mr. Gore deserved some credit for the nation's prosperity and he planned to take it.

But claiming credit for the economy has its hazards. It directly links him with Mr. Clinton.

Marshall Wittman, an analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, said in a telephone interview that Mr. Gore's taking credit for the economy illuminated both the cloud and the silver lining of being vice president. "If he is going to take credit for the good, he has to take the bad with it," Mr. Wittman said.

The question of how responsible a president is for the economy is always an open one; a vice president's share is even more open.

Robert Reischauer, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, appointed by Democrats, and now an analyst at the Brookings Institution, said that the Clinton administration had made "some very gutsy decisions" that helped vanquish the deficits and that Mr. Gore was influential in those decisions.

"Gore was known as a voice of moderation and perseverance when it came to deficit reduction," Mr. Reischauer said, "and he was on the side of the president."

But Mr. Reischauer added, "There were a lot of other factors, not the least of which was Lady Luck."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

CORRECTION-DATE: December 10, 1999, Friday

CORRECTION:

An article on Dec. 1 about a campaign appearance by Vice President Al Gore in New Hampshire rendered a passage incorrectly in a comment he made about the contamination of Love Canal. Mr. Gore said: "I found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. I had the first hearing on that issue and Toone, Tenn. But that was the one that started it all." He did not say "But I was the one that started it all."

GRAPHIC: Photos: Campaigning in New Hampshire yesterday, Al Gore, above, took questions from high school students in Concord. He made his rounds in a sport utility vehicle, below right, rather than a vice-presidential limousine. (Photographs by Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: December 1, 1999

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February 17, 2000, Thursday, Late Edition - Final
Correction Appended

SECTION: Section A; Page 26; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 1340 words

HEADLINE: THE 2000 CAMPAIGN: THE VICE PRESIDENT;
Questions of Veracity Have Long Dogged Gore

BYLINE: By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE with JOHN M. BRODER

DATELINE: ALBANY, Ga., Feb. 16

BODY:

Questions about Vice President Al Gore's honesty have emerged as a recurring motif of his contest with former Senator Bill Bradley for the Democratic presidential nomination. Mr. Bradley has angrily accused the vice president of a systematic effort to distort Mr. Bradley's record while whitewashing his own.

The criticism of Mr. Gore has been harsh enough that President Clinton was asked about it today and offered a spirited defense of his vice president. "My experience is that he is exceedingly honest and exceedingly straightforward," Mr. Clinton said at a news conference.

In an interview, Mr. Gore insisted that he had hewed to the facts both in describing his own positions and in characterizing those of Mr. Bradley. He said that Mr. Bradley equated policy disputes with dishonesty and that his Democratic opponent could not defend his own policies without resorting to personal attacks.

"The pattern is one of Senator Bradley interpreting disagreement with his positions as dishonesty," Mr. Gore said aboard Air Force 2 on Tuesday night. "Just because one has the temerity to point out that Senator Bradley's health care plan would be an unmitigated catastrophe for poor people and others who depend upon Medicaid funding is not evidence that one is being untruthful."

Mr. Bradley, in public appearances, press releases and interviews, insists that Mr. Gore has repeatedly and deliberately distorted his positions on health care, taxation, school funding and campaign finance in what he calls a "pattern of misrepresentation."

And, Mr. Bradley and his aides say, Mr. Gore has offered accounts of his own record and personal history that are at times at odds with the facts.

Some are familiar and fairly trivial examples, like Mr. Gore's taking credit for inventing the **Internet** or being the model for Erich Segal's "Love Story." But others, including his account of his service in Vietnam, his journalistic accomplishments, his views on the death penalty and abortion and his role in the Democratic fund-raising scandals of 1996, are substantial parts of his public record and rationale for seeking higher office.

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Are these exchanges part of the normal give-and-take of a political contest, the exaggerations and embellishments that are the ordinary vernacular of political speech?

Or are they signs of a deeper problem that will continue to haunt Mr. Gore throughout the primary season, into the general election, and possibly into the Oval Office?

The concern about Mr. Gore's truthfulness dates back to the earliest days of his political career.

During his failed 1988 bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, he exaggerated the danger he faced as an Army journalist in Vietnam and took credit for putting "a bunch of people" in jail during his stint as an investigative reporter at The Nashville Tennessean. The first was misleading; the second was false.

During his Congressional campaigns in the 1970's and 1980's, he overstated his one foray into real estate development to persuade groups of business executives that he was one of them.

That claim led Arlie Schardt, who was Mr. Gore's communications director during the 1988 presidential campaign, to warn the candidate in a memo "your main pitfall is exaggeration."

In an interview, Mr. Schardt said that his widely quoted warning referred only to this specific claim regarding the real estate development and was not meant as a generalized description of Mr. Gore's lack of truthfulness. "I think this whole flurry about Gore's exaggerations is exaggerated," Mr. Schardt said.

But other statements by Mr. Gore -- including those made during recent debates with Mr. Bradley -- raise more serious questions about his veracity and have had a direct impact on the current campaign.

In a debate sponsored by Iowa Public Television in January, Mr. Gore asked Chris Peterson, whose farm had been inundated in the floods of 1993, to stand and be recognized.

Turning to Mr. Bradley, Mr. Gore said, "Why did you vote against the disaster relief for Chris Peterson when he and thousands of other farmers here in Iowa needed it after those '93 floods?"

Mr. Bradley, clearly thrown off balance, turned aside Mr. Gore's question and changed the subject. Mr. Gore repeated the charge in a television commercial that began airing within days of the debate.

But Mr. Gore's accusation was false and unfair. Mr. Bradley supported the 1993 legislation that provided \$4.8 billion in emergency flood relief for farmers like Mr. Peterson. What Mr. Bradley and 31 other senators opposed was an amendment that would have provided an additional \$900 million in disaster compensation. The Clinton administration also opposed the amendment until literally minutes before floor debate ended.

Mr. Bradley's weak response to Mr. Gore's misleading charge has haunted him to this day.

"Our polls show the Bradley collapse began the day after the Jan. 9 debate," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication. "You could argue that Gore built his Iowa victory on a significant deception."

Mr. Gore has also misrepresented Mr. Bradley's health care plan, charging in various appearances that it would provide a voucher worth only \$150 a month for a family to purchase medical insurance on the private market.

In fact, the Bradley plan would grant each individual \$150 a month and provides other mechanisms for poor families to receive health care.

"That was a serious misstatement," Ms. Jamieson said.

But Mr. Gore continues to claim that Mr. Bradley's health proposal would adversely affect blacks, Latinos and people living with H.I.V. or AIDS. This accusation infuriates Mr. Bradley because it appears specifically designed to cut into his support among minorities and gays and lesbians.

But Mr. Gore repeated the charge in the interview Tuesday night.

"There is a tendency on the part of Senator Bradley to interpret any disagreement with his position as an untruthful statement," the vice president said. "For example, he became visibly apoplectic yesterday in arguing that it was a bald-faced lie to say that people with H.I.V./AIDS had experienced difficulty in obtaining private health insurance that would cover their medical expenses."

"Well, excuse me, but that's not an untruthful statement," Mr. Gore added. "It is evidence rather that Senator Bradley has made a catastrophically poor political and substantive policy judgment in designing a health-care proposal that is disintegrating in front of his eyes."

In the interview, Mr. Gore acknowledged one incident recently in which he uttered a false statement, although he preferred to call it a "mistake."

Last November, Mr. Gore said that he supported the sweeping campaign finance proposal written by Senators John McCain, Republican of Arizona, and Russell D. Feingold, Democrat of Wisconsin.

"Unlike Senator Bradley," Mr. Gore boasted, "I was a co-sponsor of it."

In fact, Mr. Feingold took office in January 1993, the same month Mr. Gore left the Senate to become vice president. The two never served together.

"That was a mistake," Mr. Gore said Tuesday. "That wasn't -- what I meant to say was that I supported that."

Questions about Mr. Gore's veracity are compounded by his service to a president whose own honesty has been assailed.

"The problem for Gore," said John G. Geer, professor of American politics at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, "is that he's Clinton's vice president and Clinton is perceived as the master of this kind of campaign. His overstatements are magnified because he's been carrying Clinton's baggage for seven years."

Mr. Clinton came to his vice president's defense in a news conference today. Responding to a question about Mr. Gore's credibility, Mr. Clinton said the vice president had always been "brutally honest" with him.

"I have never seen a tough race where people fought with each other where they didn't have different interpretations of each other's record and each other's positions," Mr. Clinton said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

CORRECTION-DATE: February 21, 2000, Monday

CORRECTION:

Because of an editing error, an article on Thursday about Al Gore's record and personal history referred incorrectly in some copies to the year Arlie Schardt was Mr. Gore's communications director. It was 1988, not 1999.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 17, 2000

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December 26, 1999, Sunday, THIRD EDITION

SECTION: METRO/REGION; Pg. B10

LENGTH: 1096 words

HEADLINE: CLASS LESSON IN MEDIA 101 N.H. STUDENTS CATCH AN ERROR, BUT FAITH IN THE PRESS IS A CASUALTY

BYLINE: By Laura Dolce, GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

BODY:

CONCORD, N.H. - When Joanne McGlynn set out to teach her media literacy students a lesson, she had no idea it would cause a stir with two of the nation's top newspapers, Vice President Al Gore, and David Letterman. Or that, in the long run, it just might be her students who taught the media a lesson.

The Concord High School teacher said it was better than any lesson she could have prepared for her students, because they have become savvy media consumers and well-informed voters (though they aren't yet old enough to pull the lever). But for the students who proved the national media had misquoted Gore, there has been a price: They said they are less trusting of what they're seeing and reading.

It started in the early fall, when McGlynn and her students invited all the presidential candidates traipsing through New Hampshire to address them on school violence. The students would then analyze the resulting coverage in the media.

It seemed simple enough, and for the first two guests, it was. Talk show host Alan Keyes came and went. The same for Senator Orrin Hatch. McGlynn set up a board with the candidates' names on top, with room for news coverage underneath. Today, under Keyes's and Hatch's names, there are a handful of news clips. But it's the third forum - the one with Gore - that's taken up all the rest of the room on the board and received national attention.

Big media's coverage of Gore's forum, which took place Nov. 30, focused not on school violence but on a comment Gore made about Love Canal, the environmental disaster area in upstate New York that captured national headlines during the 1970s. (The Globe did not cover the event.)

According to reports in the Washington Post and The New York Times, Gore said: "I found a little place in upstate New York called Love Canal. I had the first hearing on that issue and Toone, Tenn. . . . I was the one that started it all. And it all happened because one high school student got involved."

Subsequent news stories pointed out that Love Canal was declared a federal disaster site two months before Gore - then a congressman - got involved. Media reports said Gore's remark was his latest unjustified boast during a campaign in which he had already claimed to have invented the Internet and been the inspiration for the movie, "Love Story."

Other articles appeared, followed by commentary on the Sunday morning TV news shows and culminating in a "Top 10 Other Achievements Claimed by Al Gore" list on David Letterman's show.

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While the students were upset that one little quote had upstaged what they felt to be the point of the forum, they were even more upset when they reran the videotape the school had made and discovered the quote was wrong.

In fact, the students learned, Gore had said, "That was the one that started it all," referring to a letter he received from a Tennessee high school student. His point, they said, was that one student could make a difference.

The students decided to see if they could. They sent out a news release titled, "Top 10 Reasons Why Many Concord High Students Feel Betrayed by Some of the Media Coverage of Al Gore's Visit to Their School." And they hit the phones. Some of their persistence paid off.

The Post and Times ran corrections. U.S. News and World Report ran an item titled, "Guilty as Charged," in which editors admitted their part in perpetuating the error and calling the incident "a major lesson in the faults of daily journalism for the Concord, N.H., high school Gore was addressing."

The students agree it was a great lesson, but in a way lament their loss of innocence as readers and viewers.

"How can we trust the media now?" said junior Alyssa Spellman. "We see too much bias. We really want to know the truth."

"We grew up with TV," said junior Scott McAllister, "we've always believed it."

As part of the class, the students had watched "Wag the Dog," the movie in which the president's staff taps a Hollywood producer to stage a war to cover up a scandal. They also analyzed coverage of Linda Tripp.

Still, they were stunned when they came face to face with Big Media.

Though the papers ran corrections, the journalists who reported on Gore's speech defended their coverage, saying the students are too focused on the one-word error and not on the big picture.

"This has really been blown out of proportion," said Katharine Seelye, who covered the story for the Times. "We did get a word wrong. We corrected the word. It did not change the meaning."

Seelye said the Gore campaign has never complained - they even called the Associated Press office in Buffalo to offer an apology to the people of Love Canal.

McAllister said he and other students think some journalists misunderstood their intentions. "It snowballed into this whole thing. It wasn't supposed to be like that," he said. "We're not against the media. This is not a quest for fame."

For junior Erin Mullaney, all the fuss is secondary. She's disappointed that Gore's "entire message got lost. The whole point was power to the people - you live in a democracy. The media made democracy into a one-man deal."

McGlynn said she's concerned that her students - now savvier than many people of voting age - don't become too cynical. She's quick to point out that not all media coverage of the event focused on Love Canal. Some media outlets, including the hometown Concord Monitor, focused on the larger issue of school violence.

Monitor editor Mike Pride said the students should strive to be skeptical, not cynical.

"I'm discouraged that they're disillusioned," he said. The lesson the students should take from the experience, he said, is that they "need to read a lot of sources and stay on top of things."

Pride said he hopes the students continue to follow the race closely. "There's a lot of good work being done to shed light on these candidates," he said.

So far, the students are doing just that. They said they're hooked on the campaign. The big difference now is that when they read something controversial, they're more likely to go to the Internet seeking other sources.

"Now I wonder about other things," said junior Tara Baker. "It's the way they present it. It's the spin."

In a world where people can go from evening news sound bite to skit fodder for "Saturday Night Live" in a matter of hours, the students wonder how much people are really questioning what they hear and see.

"That's what's scary," Spellman said. "We've learned to look at things from different angles. Lots of adults haven't learned those lessons."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, Concord High School students watching a replay of a recent visit by Vice President Al Gore. / GLOBE PHOTO / J.D. DENHAM

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

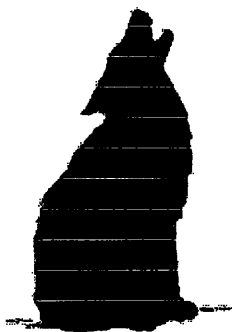
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The Daily Howler

Caveat lector

6 December 1999

Our current howler (part II): Love that story

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The Daily Howler

by Bob Somerby

somerby@dailyhowler.com

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Synopsis: The press corps loves the *Love Story* tale. There's only one problem--it's wrong.

First 'Love Story,' Now Love Canal
Ceci Connolly, *The Washington Post*, 12/2/99

Commentary by Chris Matthews
Hardball, CNBC, 12/2/99

Author of 'Love Story' Disputes Gore Story
(Hint: Tipper Wasn't Jenny)
Melinda Henneberger, *The New York Times*,
12/14/97

Where does Ceci Connolly get her quotes? Apparently, Katharine Seelye gets her quotes at the very same place. Last Wednesday night on *Hardball* (12/1), Chris Matthews showed it--Seelye had misquoted Al Gore in that morning's *New York Times* (see [THE DAILY HOWLER, 12/3/99](#)). Gore had spoken about the 1978 congressional hearings concerning Toone, Tennessee and Love Canal; Matthews played tape of Gore's actual statement, and there it was, clear as a bell--the most exciting part of Seelye's quote was just plain flat-out wrong. But the same bogus quote had appeared in Connolly's *Post* story, and there it was again the next day, this time anchoring a Connolly piece. In her 12/2 follow-up, Connolly said, in her lead, that Gore had made a "verbal misstep" about Love Canal--as he had done earlier about the movie *Love Story*, the scribe most emphatically said.

We'll take a look in the next two days at Gore's statement about Toone and Love Canal. But in her 12/2 follow-up story, Connolly was just one of many scribes who compared Love Canal to *Love Story*. On Thursday night, the same tabloid talker who cited Seelye's error was "having fun" with *Love Story* himself. Ten minutes in, he said this:

MATTHEWS (12/2): Well, let's talk about Al Gore and have some fun. We've gone into the serious part of the program now and here's the hilarious part. This is Al Gore in the sort of Zelig condition he finds himself in.

You know, the guy who keeps showing up in historic moments in history?

The talker cited *Love Story* throughout his show. Two minutes after this comment, for example, he asked a guest: "What is it, this Zelig guy who keeps saying I was the main character in *Love Story*," and he mockingly asked, "[W]ho played Al Gore in the Love Canal story? We know Ryan O'Neal played him in *Love Story* [laughter]." Just past the halfway point of the show, he promo-ed the fact that he would soon ask two more guests about Love Canal and *Love Story*; sure enough, speaking with the guests about ten minutes later, he brought up *Love Story* again. In the discussion, Gore was accused of "delusion" and was said to be living in "fantasy land." On his program the night before, Matthews had said that, in the future, "We will have to talk about the psychological tendencies involved" in Gore's alleged conduct concerning *Love Story* and Love Canal. Clearly, serious conclusions are being drawn about Gore's alleged comments on *Love Story*. One might almost imagine that a serious press corps would feel obliged to get basic facts right.

But that is the lingering problem. Pundits have shown an undying love for *Love Story*—they have brought it up time and again, for two years. But there's one big problem with the *Love Story* tale—what has been repeatedly alleged is just false. In the Post, Connolly had described Gore as "[t]he man who mistakenly claimed to have inspired the movie 'Love Story.'" But the two claims lodged in this statement are both false. For all the press corps' love for this story, the story has been simply wrong for two years. It represents one of the longest-running misstatements of fact in the sad gong show we now call our "public discourse."

The *Love Story* nonsense began in late 1997—invented by a Maureen Dowd column—and in the aftermath of that piece, Melinda Henneberger wrote a lengthy story on the topic for the Sunday New York Times (12/14/97). No one has ever disputed the facts she reported; pundits have simply preferred to ignore them. But what Henneberger reported, two years ago, contradicts both the things Connolly still says.

First question: Did Gore "inspire *Love Story*?" As part of her research, Henneberger interviewed Erich Segal, who had known Gore at Harvard while writing *Love Story*. And sorry, folks, we hate to upset you, but here's Henneberger, on what Segal said:

HENNEBERGER: The character of the preppy Harvard hockey player Oliver Barrett 4th was modeled on both Mr. Gore and his college roommate, the actor Tommy Lee Jones.

According to Segal, Jones had been the model for the "macho athlete with the heart of a poet" part of the character, and Gore had been the model for the young college student with a highly accomplished father to live up to.

So Gore *had* been a "model" for the part. Parsing pundits will doubtless note: none of this means that Gore "inspired" *Love Story*. But it also became clear in Henneberger's piece that Gore had made no such claim. Gore's meaningless remarks about *Love Story* had

been made on a long, late-night plane ride, in a conversation with two respected reporters—Rick Berke of the New York Times, and Karen Tumulty of *Time*. Henneberger interviewed both reporters. Sorry, folks, we hate to disappoint you, but here's Tumulty's account of what Gore said:

HENNEBERGER: "[Gore] said Segal had told some reporters in Tennessee that it was based on him and Tipper," Ms. Tumulty said. **"He said all I know is that's what he told reporters in Tennessee."**

Berke agreed that Gore attributed the story to reporters in Tennessee. And sure enough, Segal confirmed that there had been such a story, in the Nashville Tennessean. Segal told Henneberger that the reporter "just exaggerated" a bit, playing "the local-hero angle;" for example, Segal said the reporter added Tipper Gore into the mix, though she had not been the model for *Love Story*'s other lead character in the tale, Jenny Cavilleri.

Incredible, isn't it, that this sort of nonsense inspires our press two years later? That on the basis of absolute idiocy like this, a major public figure is called "delusional" on TV, and a reporter who can't even get simple quotes right calls his character into question? *Two years later!* Welcome to the riot of nonsense and spin we laughingly call our public discourse—and welcome to the world of Ceci Connolly, whose grisly work for the Washington Post has been on this level all year.

But the facts of this story, as reported *two years ago*, are, sad to say, all too simple. Gore told reporters that he had seen a newspaper story saying he and Tipper were the models for *Love Story*. That's "all I know," Gore had said. And everyone agrees such a story did exist. In a rational world, that would end the silly tale, but for the record, Segal said that Gore and Jones *were* the two models for the Ryan O'Neal part. Now read again what Connolly wrote—*two years later*—and raise a cup to our great public discourse:

CONNOLLY: [Gore] mistakenly claimed to have inspired the movie "Love Story."

Say hello to our brilliant celebrity press corps, 1999 style.

Those are the facts about this story, a story the press corps has pimped around for two years. Again this week, Connolly misstates the basic facts, and unlicensed psychiatrists examine Gore's psyche. The facts of this story are simple to state—although they're embarrassing facts for the Washington press corps. But isn't it time that the press corps corrected its errors? Shouldn't these simple facts finally be told?

Tomorrow: The *Love Story* flap was invented by Dowd. What about the Love Canal story?

Keeping you posted: We have written to principals at the Washington Post, asking the paper to correct Connolly's errors. We'll

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provide a full record at the end of the week.

Read with care: Those who review Henneberger's 1997 story are advised to proceed with caution. The relevant facts do emerge from her piece, but she manages to spin them substantially. Although Hennberger knew what Gore had actually said—and although she knew that what Gore had said was correct—she began her story pointing out the flaws in what he was *alleged* to have said. Good thinking! In short, Henneberger made quite a big deal about the fact that Tipper Gore was *not* Jenny Cavilleri (that's the headline). Only later in her piece did she reveal what she'd learned: Gore never said that she was.

Only in the great New York Times can one *expect* to see this kind of writing.

Why did Henneberger bury the lead? The *Love Story* flap had been invented by Maureen Dowd, in one of the dumbest columns of the past several years; we have discussed this in more detail (links below). Just guessing: if we had learned, as Henneberger did, that Dowd's column had been based on bad facts, we wouldn't have wanted to rush that news to the top of our story either. But the *facts* in Henneberger's story are clear; Gore only said that he had seen a newspaper story, and everyone agrees that the story did exist. On that basis, Gore has been called a crackpot and a liar for the past two years. Say hello to your celebrity press corps.

Visit our incomparable archives: Past reports on this pitiful story:

See THE DAILY HOWLER, 3/30/99: *Time* barely mentioned Gore's *Love Story* comment. But Maureen Dowd somehow spied a dark motive.

See THE DAILY HOWLER, 3/31/99: Melinda Hennberger learned that Gore had been misquoted. She buried it deep in her story.

See THE DAILY HOWLER, 4/1/99: A week after Henneberger described what had happened, Sam and Cokie didn't seem to have heard.

See THE DAILY HOWLER, 4/2/99: With *Love Story* back in the news in March, scribes took turns misreporting basic facts.

See THE DAILY HOWLER, 6/21/99: The RNC threw a birthday party for Erich Segal (in absentia). Pundits made gifts of misstatements.

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December 14, 1997, Sunday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section 1; Page 40; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 1343 words

HEADLINE: Author of 'Love Story' Disputes a Gore Story

BYLINE: By MELINDA HENNEBERGER

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Dec. 13

BODY:

Erich Segal, author of the weeper "Love Story," said today that only the emotional family baggage of the romantic hero in his novel was inspired by a young Al Gore.

Mr. Segal knocked down recent reports, based on comments by the Vice President, that Mr. Gore and his wife, Tipper, were the models for the young lovers in his 1970 book and the subsequent movie starring Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw.

Those reports were half-true, Mr. Segal said: The character of the preppy Harvard hockey player Oliver Barrett 4th was modeled on both Mr. Gore and his college roommate, the actor Tommy Lee Jones.

But it was Mr. Jones who inspired the half of the character that was a sensitive stud, a macho athlete with the heart of a poet, Mr. Segal said. The author attributed to Mr. Gore only the character's controlling father and feeling that his family was pressuring him to follow in Dad's footsteps.

Mr. Segal said he knew the two of them at Harvard when he was on sabbatical there in 1968, and knew Mrs. Gore as well. But the character of the cool, smart-mouthed Radcliffe musician, Jenny Cavilleri, was in no way based on Mrs. Gore, Mr. Segal said, and the wild romance in the novel was not inspired by the couple.

"I did not draw a thing from Tipper," he said. "I knew her only as Al's date."

Mr. Segal said he had been "befuddled" by the report, which was published in Time magazine this week, and had called the Vice President to find out what had happened. Mr. Gore told Mr. Segal that the whole thing was a misunderstanding. Then, Mr. Segal said, Mr. Gore told him, "Let's remember what happened." And, he said, "It's important now."

On Friday, in interviews with the New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, Ginny Terzano, not only did not challenge the story but also confirmed that the novel was "loosely based" on the Gores. She also added some details, saying that the Gores and Mr. Jones had socialized with Mr. Segal when the three men lived in Dunster House at Harvard. When asked how Mr. Gore felt about the story, Ms. Terzano said he thought it was "cute."

And, asked why such an appealing fact had never come to light during his years of public life, Ms. Terzano said:

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"Because they're shy people, those Gores. They don't talk about themselves."

But Ms. Terzano said today that Mr. Gore had not bothered to correct the story because he had more important things to do. She said that she simply had not checked with Mr. Gore about the story on Friday and had based the confirmation on his comment on the plane. Ms. Terzano said that she, and not the Vice President, thought it was a cute story. "I still do," she said.

In 1970, Mr. Segal told The Times that the novel's basic story came from one of his students at Yale, whose wife had died, and that the model for Jenny was a woman Mr. Segal had dated in his Harvard days. Mr. Segal said Mr. Gore told him on the phone this week that he knew that Mrs. Gore was not Jenny and had never said she was.

"The Vice President never misspoke," Ms. Terzano said of his initial statement about his connection to "Love Story." "He may have been misheard."

It has been a difficult year for Mr. Gore, who was implicated in questionable campaign fund-raising practices. An article that the famously wooden Vice President was the model for a strong, romantic hero might have cast him in a softer light as he approaches an anticipated run for the Presidency in 2000.

The Time magazine article about the Vice President included this passage: "Around midnight, after a three-city tour of Texas last month, the Vice President came wandering back to the press compartment of Air Force Two. Sliding behind a table with the two reporters covering him that day, he picked slices of fruit from their plates and spent two hours swapping opinions about movies and telling stories about old chums like Erich Segal, who, Gore said, used Al and Tipper as models for the uptight preppy and his free-spirited girlfriend in 'Love Story.' "

That one paragraph was the talk of Washington this week, and the most famous line from "Love Story" -- "Love means never having to say you're sorry" -- was recalled endlessly. "Love Story" was a three-hankie movie, with Jenny dying in the end. It was a hit, nominated for best picture and six other Oscars, though it won only for its music.

In their phone conversation a few days ago, Mr. Gore reminded Mr. Segal that while Mr. Segal was on his book tour for "Love Story," a reporter for The Nashville Tennessean who knew that Mr. Gore and the author were friends had asked if there was not a little bit of Al Gore in Oliver Barrett. Mr. Segal said yes, there was, but the reporter "just exaggerated," Mr. Segal said. "He made it to be the local-hero angle."

Mr. Segal said the Vice President told him that all he had said on the plane was that the article had made the connection -- and got it wrong.

"Al said, 'I didn't say that' about being the model," Mr. Segal said.

"Al attributed it to the newspaper, he talked about the newspaper," Mr. Segal said at another point in the interview. "They conveniently omitted that part. Time thought it was more piquant to leave that out. He was talking on the plane off the record, a drink with the boys after a tiring day. I don't think he will be reminiscing much anymore."

Karen Tumulty, the Time reporter on the plane, said Mr. Gore brought up the story and in no way tried to knock it down, then or later. And no one on his staff has done so in the days since the article was published, Ms. Tumulty said, even though she has since talked to several members of his staff.

Ms. Terzano said Mr. Gore had not disputed the story because "it was a nonsense sentence in an important article and he had other things on his mind."

Ms. Tumulty said that on the plane, Mr. Gore had been talking about how ironic it was that his old roommate, Mr. Jones, got his acting break in the movie "Love Story."

"He said Segal had told some reporters in Tennessee that it was based on him and Tipper," Ms. Tumulty said. "He said all I know is that's what he told reporters in Tennessee."

Richard L. Berke, a reporter for The Times also traveling on the plane, said Mr. Gore left the impression that he and Mrs. Gore were the models for the couple in the book, but also left room for doubt by attributing it to reporters in Tennessee.

Today, when told that Mr. Segal had characterized the reports as an exaggeration, Ms. Terzano said that in "a very casual, off-the-record conversation, Mr. Gore said, 'There were some people who thought the book was loosely based on me.'" Both Ms. Tumulty and the Times reporter said the conversation was not off the record.

And Ms. Tumulty said the Vice President "didn't say loosely or not loosely. He didn't leave any doubt."

Mr. Segal said that when he met Mr. Gore and Mr. Jones at Harvard in 1968 he liked them very much and started writing the screenplay that eventually became "Love Story."

He also knew Mrs. Gore, who was attending Boston University and was dating Al Gore. But Mr. Segal said he did not draw literary inspiration from Mrs. Gore, whose father ran a plumbing supply company, for the character of Jenny Cavilleri, a baker's daughter who married Oliver despite the opposition of his blueblood family.

The part of the Oliver Barrett character that was inspired by Mr. Gore, Mr. Segal said, "was that he was always under pressure to follow in his father's footsteps and that was the conflict, to keep up the family tradition. Albert Gore Sr., Albert Gore Jr., Oliver Barrett 3d, Oliver Barrett 4th -- you have to change some things."

The aspect of the character based on Mr. Jones, he said, "was the tough, macho guy who's a poet at heart. They were different sides of the same coin, hounded by a father who's a jock and an achiever."

Did Mr. Gore present his father, a former United States Senator from Tennessee, in this light? "He made it inferentially clear," Mr. Segal said. "He was nervous. He was sensitive to being Albert Gore Jr."

GRAPHIC: Photos: Erich Segal, the author of "Love Story," set the record straight. (Greg Gorman, 1992): Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper, at right, celebrating the opening of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Washington in October. At left, the actors Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw in "Love Story." Mr. O'Neal's role was partly modeled on Mr. Gore. (Reuters)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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The White House Bulletin

December 15, 1997, Monday

SECTION: IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND AROUND TOWN

LENGTH: 371 words

HEADLINE: RNC Highlights Gore's Role In "Love Story."

BODY:

Time magazine reported last week that Vice President Al Gore had recently told reporters he and his wife Tipper were the models for the two main characters in the book, and the ensuing film, "Love Story." Yesterday, however, Gore spokeswoman Ginny Terzano said a "miscommunication" by Gore led reporters to come to the conclusion that the Gores' college romance inspired the book. Borrowing from the famous line in the book as she offered Gore's apology, Terzano commented, "If love means never having to say you're sorry, then politics means you have to say it all the time," adding: "We apologize if there was a miscommunication with reporters in an off-the-record conversation where they did not take notes."

"Love Story" author Erich Segal told the New York Times he was "befuddled" by Gore's comments. He said he called Gore, and the Vice President said it was a misunderstanding. Segal told the Times he came to know both Gore and his roommate, actor Tommy Lee Jones, during his 1968 sabbatical at Harvard University. Segal said that when he was creating Oliver Barrett IV, the book's romantic hero, Jones inspired the side that was "the tough, macho guy who's a poet at heart." Gore was the basis for the side of the character with a controlling father, who was pressured to follow in that father's footsteps, Segal said. "That was the conflict, to keep up the family tradition. Albert Gore Sr., Albert Gore Jr., Oliver Barrett III, Oliver Barrett IV -- you have to change some things," Segal said. Segal said he knew Mrs. Gore, then a Boston University student, but she was not the basis for the book's female love interest, the hip Jenny Cavilleri. Segal has previously said she was inspired by a woman he dated at Harvard.

Gore's problems have caused the Republican National Committee's press office to create a contest for "the best 'love means...' slogan," said RNC press secretary Mike Collins this morning. "The winner will get an Al Gore Chia Head, complete with a male-pattern baldness spot in the back," said Collins, saying contest submissions should be faxed to 202-863-8550. Collins said five slogans are already in hand, including: "Love means no controlling legal authority."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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December 13, 1997, Saturday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 15; Column 6; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 722 words

HEADLINE: Liberties;
Is Ollie Allie?

BYLINE: By MAUREEN DOWD

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Forget Henry Cisneros, global warming and Janet Reno.

The week's most stunning revelation was a report in Time magazine that Al and Tipper Gore are the models for that touchstone couple of bad literature -- Oliver Barrett IV and Jenny Cavilleri, the uptight Harvard preppie and free-spirited 'Cliffie' of "Love Story."

The Vice President dropped this literary bombshell, disclosing that his college romance with Tipper inspired his Harvard pal, Erich Segal, who lived in Dunster House at the same time that Mr. Gore and Tommy Lee Jones were roommates there in the late 60's. Mr. Segal hung out with the lovebirds, the chiseled scion of a Tennessee political dynasty and the perky Boston University coed, Mary Elizabeth (Tipper) Aitcheson.

"Love Story" was about a jock who cried. A preppie defies his wealthy father to marry an ethnic, working-class pianist, and learns she is dying of a mysterious disease. Until "The Bridges of Madison County," it was the most famous bad weepy. When the movie starring Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw came out -- with Tommy Lee Jones reprising his role as roommate -- the author bragged that the ushers would need mops.

It's somewhat suspicious that Mr. Gore has chosen this moment to drop the news -- unknown even to many close friends and aides. Does he think, going into 2000, that this will give him a romantic glow, or a romantic afterglow? It reminds me of Jackie Kennedy whispering in Teddy White's ear about "Camelot."

"I was, like, 'Wow!' This means Al's going to be President," laughs Carter Eskew, a Gore friend. "That was a huge book and movie about the coolest couple. The guy was a sensitive stud, an athletic Alan Alda."

I called Erich Segal to see if Ollie was Allie, but his London agent said Mr. Segal was writing in seclusion.

He did tell The New York Times in 1970 that Oliver was a fellow student at Harvard. Jenny, he said, was a pastiche, which makes sense since Tipper is still alive, and was raised by a banker, not a baker. She met Al when he was prepping to become a preppie at St. Alban's, the brother school of her alma mater, the National Cathedral School. Tipper, in fact, was the sort Jenny disdained as "Wendy Wasp."

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Perhaps Mr. Segal, who contributed to Mr. Gore's 1984 senatorial campaign, is squirreled away bringing the saga of Ollie-Allie up to date so it can be published in time for the campaign. Mr. Segal could model this sequel on a couple with a real class chasm -- an uptight preppie Vice President and a free-spirited President from a working-class background. Instead of a life-threatening illness, there are life-threatening legal problems. Instead of a beloved wife wasting away, beloved issues and ideas waste away. In this version, the preppie does not rebel against authority, except occasionally, when he refuses to go over to Marty Peretz's to eat canapes and debate the Middle East. And this time around, Tommy Lee Jones gets all the girls.

Imagine a Segalesque chapter where Al and Bill, at their regular White House lunch, contemplate the unthinkable: breaking up.

Al is talking about "digital earth" and "distributed intelligence," but he can tell Bill is distracted.

"Wise up, Preppie, wouldja please?" Bill says. "I don't give a hoot about digital earth. We won't be doing that at Dreamworks SKGC."

"You are going to Hollywood?" Al asks, dumbfounded.

"Steven and David and Jeffrey really want me. I can hardly wait."

Al grabs him by the shoulders, maybe a bit too roughly. "Hey -- you're going to leave me here alone with Janet Reno?"

Al feels the barriers in his soul returning, those inner divisions between head and heart. Suddenly his earth is not in balance.

"Allie, don't be stupid," Bill says. "It's inevitable that we go our separate ways. You're a preppie zillionaire with a sense of entitlement and I'm a social zero with a lot of legal bills."

Al is still holding onto Bill's shoulders. "But we're together now," he pleads. "We're happy."

Bill bites his lip. "I wish I wasn't leaving you with this mess over the phone calls, the Indian casinos, the Buddhist temple and all."

Al does what he has never done in the President's presence. He cries. Bill wraps him in a big hug, murmuring, "It'll be O.K." "Just remember, Preppie, you're perfect. Being Al Gore means never having to say you're sorry."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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December 16, 1997, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 31; Column 1; Editorial Desk**LENGTH:** 723 words

HEADLINE: Journal;
Who's Sorry Now

BYLINE: By FRANK RICH**BODY:**

If Bill Clinton had decided to hitch his star to a movie from 1970, at least he would have chosen "Five Easy Pieces."

What's bizarre, if all too revealing, about Al Gore's now inoperative boast to reporters on Air Force Two that he and his wife, Tipper, were the basis for the hero and heroine of "Love Story" is not that he inflated his past but that he would think that being likened to the insufferable preppy Harvard hockey player Oliver Barrett 4th was something to brag about in the first place.

Even in its day, "Love Story" was lampooned not just as soap opera but as an unintentional sendup of jocky Ivy League gentility at its most inbred and lightweight. Ollie was a guy who no doubt got into Harvard only because of affirmative action for whites: his father presumably gave a lot of money to his alma mater and didn't get too graphically plastered at reunion time. In Cambridge, many found Ryan O'Neal's glassy-eyed hero embarrassing, and assumed the character was revenge on the part of the writer who dreamed him up, Erich Segal, a Yale man.

The Vice President's effort to overcompensate for his public stiffness by casting himself as the role model for Ollie is so culturally tone-deaf you wouldn't be surprised if he took credit next for inspiring the Captain and Tennille. But it's no crime not to be hip. What gives Mr. Gore's trivial fib about "Love Story" resonance was his handling of it after it was published in Time magazine. Disingenuousness, not stiffness, is his real character problem, and it cannot be solved by another Letterman appearance or all the macarena shtick in creation.

For nearly a full week, even after Mr. Segal had privately corrected Mr. Gore on the facts, the Vice President's office stood by his silly story. As late as Friday, his spokeswoman reiterated to my colleague Maureen Dowd that "Love Story" was "loosely based" on the Gores. Once Mr. Segal spoke up on Saturday, Mr. Gore fessed up, but not before he had impugned the reporters who repeated his inflated claim by saying they had "misheard" him and violated an off-the-record confidence.

This, alas, is the same prevaricating Al Gore who hid behind the phrase "no controlling legal authority" in a press conference to deny funny-money improprieties. It's the Al Gore who later told one reporter (Joe Klein of The New Yorker) that that March press conference was "one very big mistake" but then refused to concede any mistakes at all in a subsequent interview on the subject (with Richard L. Berke of The Times) published the same week this month. It's the Al Gore who brought the '96 Democratic convention to tears with his wrenching anti-smoking speech about his sister's fatal bout with lung cancer -- but failed to note that he didn't stop accepting tobacco campaign money until six years

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after her death.

President Clinton is a master at making us look the other way at his selective candor. He never promised us an Eagle Scout in the Rose Garden, and his endless self-revisionism feels authentically in character; he's true to his untrue self. Mr. Gore, however, made a different pact with the public. He has presented himself as a figure of rectitude, and so has farther to plummet (and plummet he does, if polls are to be believed) when he steps off his self-erected pedestal.

Mr. Gore is beginning to seem less an heir to Mr. Clinton than to his White House predecessor. Like George Bush, Al Gore Jr. is the son of a senator, born to privilege -- with St. Alban's and Harvard substituting for Phillips Academy and Yale. Instead of formative years in Greenwich, Mr. Gore was raised in Washington's ritzy Fairfax Hotel -- unhumble beginnings both men have tried to play down, not always successfully. Where Mr. Bush at his most supercilious addressed the nation as if we were peons who couldn't get into his country club, Mr. Gore condescends to us as if we were idiots who couldn't get into the Ivy League. Such is the main distinction between Republican and Democratic noblesse oblige.

In this sense both men do share a kinship with Oliver Barrett 4th, even if they didn't inspire his creation. As Mr. Bush proved, such a character can even be elected President, though it helps to run against a candidate like Michael Dukakis, whose only claim to a Hollywood lineage might be "The Invisible Man."

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